

NORWAY

STATEMENT BY MR AUDUN HALVORSEN, STATE SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AT THE FOURTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES TO THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION, 26 JUNE 2018

Ambassador Bellouki, I would like to join other delegates in welcoming you as Chair of the Conference of the States Parties.

Mr Chair, Ladies and gentlemen,

Norway aligns itself fully with the statement (to be) delivered on behalf of the European Union. Let me add the following in my national capacity as the representative for Norway.

In 1993, we came together and took the collective decision to ban chemical weapons completely and forever. We decided, for the sake of humanity, for our children and their descendants, to rid the world of the threat of chemical attacks by eliminating this category of heinous and indiscriminate weapons of mass destruction.

With a total of 193 Member States, the OPCW is truly a global achievement.

The 2013 Nobel Peace Prize also testifies to the success of the OPCW, which embodies the spirit of the UN Charter. We reaffirm our steadfast support for the Convention and the OPCW. We commend Director-General Üzümcü for his leadership and for the way the OPCW has responded to reports of non-compliance.

This is not, however, the time for complacency.

We are deeply concerned by reports that chemical weapons are still being used in flagrant violation of the unequivocal global ban. In Syria and Iraq. In Malaysia and the UK.

It is now more urgent than ever that we all stand up for the Convention and the OPCW. We must continue to condemn in the strongest possible terms any use of chemical weapons under any circumstances, and call for those responsible to be held accountable.

That is still not enough.

We believe it is the responsibility of all of us as members of the international community to take firm action to uphold the norm against chemical weapons. And to prevent and deter any future use.

We need a collective response to this continued threat. Because it puts us all, collectively and individually, at risk.

We must remain resolute in the fight against chemical weapons.

Mr Chair,

The OPCW is our most important instrument for collective action in this area. For upholding the norm and the Convention. For putting an end to the development and use of chemical weapons. And for providing assistance, and carrying out verification and fact-finding.

No other international organisation is as well placed to work towards our collective goal.

That is why Norway has supported the convening of this special session of the Conference of the States Parties. It is both timely and necessary.

And that is why Norway is co-sponsoring a draft decision to strengthen our collective response to chemical weapons.

It is now imperative to strengthen the mandate of the OPCW so that it is able to address the grave challenges ahead. And above all, so that it is able to help identify the perpetrators of chemical weapons use. For this evil to end, it must be exposed.

Norway therefore calls on all Member States to support measures to strengthen the OPCW and to prevent all use of chemical weapons. This will make the world a safer place for all of us.

Thank you.