



SLOVENIA

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY!

Statement
by H.E. Andrej Logar,
State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia
at the Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical
Weapons Convention
The Hague, 26-28 June 2018

Mr Chairperson, Director General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to start by expressing **sincere appreciation to the chairperson** Ambassador Bellouki who has the honor to chair yet another meeting/session of the Conference in his mandate, unfortunately due to **repeated use of chemical weapons**. This is a very **unfortunate but meaningful reason** to call for a **Special Session** of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention that **Slovenia strongly supported**.

It is also an honour for me to attend the last Conference of the States Parties under the capable leadership of the Technical Secretariat of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons by the **Director General Ahmet Üzümcü**. Despite some **turbulent times** during your mandates, you were able to reach some **remarkable achievements that were crowned with the Nobel Peace Prize in 2013**. I wish you every success in your future endeavours.

Mr Chairperson,

The international community remains confronted with the **proliferation of use of chemical weapons** - in Iraq, Syria, Malaysia, most recently in Salisbury, which is utterly **unacceptable**.

Slovenia, a strong supporter of non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), has **demonstrated its commitment to fight the use of chemical weapons** as an active member of the OPCW and a State Party to the Convention on Chemical Weapons since its very beginning in 1997.

We appreciate and **support the professional, independent and impartial work of OPCW** Technical Secretariat, Fact-Finding Mission and its Declarations Assessment Team. We regret the failure to reach an agreement on the renewal of the mandate of the **OPCW – UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM)**. We have also upheld the decision of the Executive Council 83/DEC (2016) and all relevant UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR).

Slovenia is concerned about the **risk of non-state actors acquiring WMD's**, chemical weapons included. We have therefore supported UNSC resolution 1540, its subsequent resolutions and the work of the 1540 Committee to strengthen global capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to the use of WMD for terrorist purposes. We expanded the **Slovenia-led Western Balkan Counter-Terrorism initiative (WBCTi)** which links up individual initiatives in this area into a joint, comprehensive effort, into the **Integrative Internal Security Governance (IISG) concept**, which includes prevention of violent extremism and the fight against terrorism as well as measures against organised crime and those aimed at border security.

Mr Chairperson,

It is Slovenia's firm belief that the **use of chemical weapons**, including the use of any toxic chemicals as weapons, by State or non-State actors is **unacceptable, represents a breach of international law and may amount to a war crime or a crime against humanity**. It must thus be strongly condemned. The responsibility of the international community is to **allow for no impunity** and to identify and hold accountable the perpetrators of such acts.

Impunity damages efforts to uphold the **integrity and credibility of the international chemical non-proliferation regime** which the international community has strived to strengthen for decades.

Slovenia has been **among the initiators of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM)** to assist in investigating and prosecuting international crimes committed in Syria, as an important step in efforts to further accountability. It would be necessary for the OPCW to share its information with the IIIM.

Additionally to that Slovenia has **joined the International Partnership against Impunity for the use of Chemical Weapons in April this year.**

Mr Chairperson, Director General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is now time that we invite the Director General to work towards establishing the arrangements for the OPCW Technical Secretariat to provide **technical expertise to identify those involved in the use of chemical weapons** where the use of it is confirmed. We urgently need arrangements, where the Technical secretariat will be able to conduct **independent investigation of an alleged use of chemical weapons, with a view to facilitating attribution** of chemical weapons attacks.

Mr Chairperson,

Let me conclude by saying that Slovenia supports the draft decision proposed by the UK for today's meeting, because we are convinced that **we have to do more to reach our goal – implementation of international law, of standards and norms on prohibition of use of chemical weapons** as well as **holding accountable the perpetrators of chemical weapons attacks.**

Slovenia sincerely hopes that we will be **able to give to new Director General of the OPCW, Ambassador Fernando Arias clear political mandate to take this work forward.**

Thank you.