



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

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**MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS
TO THE FIRST SPECIAL SESSION OF
THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES
TO REVIEW THE OPERATION OF THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION
DELIVERED BY MR ENRIQUE ROMAN-MOREY,
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DIRECTOR OF THE GENEVA BRANCH OF THE DEPARTMENT FOR
DISARMAMENT AFFAIRS OF THE UNITED NATIONS
THE HAGUE, 28 APRIL 2003**

The First Review Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) is a welcome event for the entire world community. It marks an important milestone in multilateral efforts to eliminate an entire class of weapons of mass destruction, under stringent international verification.

The importance of the global process of chemical disarmament cannot be overstated. By embracing a non-discriminatory disarmament standard, by promoting multilateral cooperation, by institutionalizing such cooperation in the work of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, and by aspiring to become fully universal in membership, the CWC represents an effective and credible multilateral approach to the threats arising from the possession and proliferation of such weapons.

Thanks to this treaty regime, the world has seen a reduction in its stockpiles of chemical weapons, new progress in eliminating existing stockpiles, much tighter controls over the materials and technology that can be used to make such weapons, an intrusive verification system to monitor compliance, improvements in the transparency of relevant holdings of weapons and related materials, expanded information sharing among the parties, and enhanced export controls. Needless to say, progress in all these areas will also help enormously in alleviating the danger of chemical weapons falling into the hands of terrorists.

We cannot, however, afford to be complacent. Although the Convention now has 151 States Parties, a number of significant States, including in regions characterized by serious political tensions, continue to remain outside it. Recent events have made clear the urgent need to ensure the complete universality of the treaty. The need to accelerate the process of chemical disarmament requires added financial assistance from the international community. A solemn commitment by States parties to the full implementation and further strengthening of all provisions of the Convention is needed to give new impetus to the realization of its goals.



The Chemical Weapons Convention performs a vital confidence-building role in international society. Reinforced by effective national legislation, the CWC enables its States parties to satisfy themselves that others are not seeking to acquire such weapons. The Convention thus serves a practical goal of enhancing security, a moral goal of eliminating one of the world's most cruel and inhumane weapons, and a political goal of establishing a common forum for reaffirming and strengthening the global taboo on such weapons.

Consistent with its solemn responsibility under the Charter to maintain international peace and security, the United Nations has worked closely with the OPCW, and recognizes the need for further cooperation over the years ahead. This need can only grow in importance, especially in light of new technological developments – including some that may create new weapons threats, and others that may offer new tools to strengthen the implementation of the Treaty.

I wish you all success in your deliberations.

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