

**Statement at the Third Review Conference of the Organisation for the Prohibition of
Chemical Weapons**

by

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Mr Chair,

Let me congratulate you on being elected as Chair of The Third Review Conference. We appreciate your dedication to securing an open, transparent and successful Conference. Your extensive experience from the OPCW will be of great value in our deliberations, and you can rely on Norway's full support.

In the course of the next two weeks, the Third Review Conference is an opportunity for the States Parties to not only review the operations of the Convention, but also to give direction to the Organisation for the next five years. Norway would especially like to thank H.E. Ambassador Nassima Baghli of Algeria for her efforts in guiding the Open-Ended Working Group for the preparations of the Conference.

We appreciate that His Excellency Ban Ki-moon has made time to attend this conference.

Mr Chair,

The core objective of the Chemical Weapons Convention is the complete and permanent elimination of all chemical weapons and their means of production under strict OPCW verification. Until destruction is completed, this will remain the primary task for the Organisation. The Russian Federation, the United States of America as well as Libya have yet to complete their obligations as mandated by the Convention. While recognizing that important progress has been made, we urge the possessor states to do their utmost to meet their destruction targets in an expedient and transparent manner.

The possibility that chemical weapons may have been used in Syria is of serious concern to the entire international community. This matter represents one of the most challenging tasks the Organization has faced since the entry-into-force of the Convention. Norway fully supports the Director General and his staff in their preparations for the investigation that has been initiated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Norway urges all parties in Syria to cooperate fully with the investigation and to ensure that the investigation team is able to complete its work safely and effectively.

Norway is concerned about the disastrous humanitarian consequences of any use of chemical weapons. We urge all parties in Syria to act responsibly, avoid any use of these abhorrent weapons, and keep them secure. The use of chemical weapons by anyone under any circumstances would be reprehensible and completely contrary to the legal norms and standards of the international community.

Mr Chair,

The Third Review Conference will assess the operation of the Convention. In order to deter violations, essential safeguards need to be operational. It is vital that the OPCW maintain a high standard of readiness to conduct challenge inspections or investigations of alleged use in accordance with the provisions of the Convention.

The Third Review Conference is an opportunity to ensure that the Convention remains a relevant part of the international security architecture. According to the Convention, reviews shall take into account any relevant scientific and technological development. One of our tasks is to look at the implications of new developments, opportunities and risks for the Chemical Weapons Convention regime, as described in the Report of the Advisory Panel on the Future Priorities of the Organisation.

State Parties should also pay special attention to the well founded advice from the Scientific Advisory Board, and make sure that this is reflected in the outcome document. A particular issue is that of toxic chemicals in law enforcement. Norway agrees with the Board that the technical discussions on the potential use of toxic chemicals for law enforcement have been exhaustive. This Review Conference is an excellent opportunity to further discussing the broader implications of the use of toxic chemicals for law-enforcement purposes.

Mr Chair,

The future success of the Chemical Weapons Convention depends on the regulatory approach by the governments of its States Parties, and on the awareness of the Convention and its requirements among a wider audience. The Chemical Weapons Convention could benefit from the example set by of other comparable instruments, such as the Biological Weapons Convention and the NPT, and develop a more open and inclusive atmosphere than today. Engaging the scientific community could help to ensure that its members do not inadvertently contribute to proliferation or other hostile purposes. External stakeholders, such as chemical industry associations, Non-Governmental Organisations, think-tanks, academia and others, can provide valuable ideas and input to the advancement of the Convention. We commend the decision taken at this Conference to organise a plenary meeting for presentations from Non-Governmental Organisations. This is definitely a big step in the right direction.

Without universal ratification we cannot say that chemical weapons are of the past. Norway calls on the remaining 8 states to ratify or accede to the Convention without delay. We, the State Parties, all have an obligation to promote the Convention in our bilateral contacts and continue to support the Director General's efforts to ensure universal adherence.

The fact that only about half of all States Parties have fully implemented article VII detracts from the Convention's effectiveness and credibility. We welcome the development of a tailor-made approach by the Technical Secretariat and look forward to it progressing further, i.e. through a pilot project - a first step on the road to full Chemical Weapons Convention implementation in all States Parties. Moreover, national implementation is essential for preventing chemical terrorism. The obligations set out in UN Security Council Resolution 1540 complement the Chemical Weapons Convention and are binding to all UN Member States.

Fostering international cooperation in the field of peaceful uses of chemistry is an important goal of the Convention, and for many State Parties it is a major incentive to stay engaged with the OPCW. Norway has contributed to the Africa Program and supports the further strengthening of the programs for International Cooperation and Assistance, paired with an improved evaluation of the programs' effectiveness. To further strengthen the area of International Cooperation and Assistance, it is imperative that we fully implement the decision on art XI taken at the 16th Session of the Conference of States Parties.

Mr Chair,

While acknowledging that we still have some way to go before the Convention is fully implemented, we ought to take some time at this point to recognise our achievements. The Chemical Weapons Convention has codified international norms and standards that have come to prohibit the use of Chemical Weapons under any circumstance, even beyond the states parties of the Convention, thus strengthening the safety and security of all states and their inhabitants.

Finally, may I request that this statement be treated as an official document of The Third Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Thank you.