

**Statement by Ambassador Mary Margaret Muchada,
Permanent Representative of Zimbabwe to the Benelux
Countries, the European Union and the Organization for
the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to the Third Review
Conference
The Hague, 9 - 19 April, 2013**

Mr. Chairman
The Director General of the OPCW
Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen

As I take the floor for the first time, allow me to pay tribute to you Ambassador Krzysztof Paturski. My delegation commends the way you are conducting the business of this Conference. First and foremost, I wish to assure you of the importance my delegation attaches to this Review Conference.

We are encouraged that the world has given this conference the attention it deserves. Seeing the United Nations Secretary General and many dignitaries at the official opening spoke volumes about this commitment.

Zimbabwe associates itself fully with the statement delivered on behalf of NAM and the CWC States Parties and China by the Honourable Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran. We further commit ourselves to the position pronounced on behalf of the Africa Group of States Parties by H.E. Sirajuddin Hamid Yousif, Permanent Representative of the Sudan. In the same vein, we join the entire Conference in applauding the preparatory work carried out by the Open-ended Working Group under the able stewardship of H.E Ambassador Nassima Baghli of Algeria.

Zimbabwe recently held a meeting of all OPCW alumni and took stock of what outcome we would like from this conference. It was encouraging to see how far we have come.

It is our firm belief that national security will be guaranteed when the national authorities have the required capacities to monitor developments within their borders. We therefore would like to see the Programme for Africa strengthened and more resources accorded to a strong technical cooperation programme that would help some of us to develop strong national capacities. For instance, at national level it is critical to have rapid result teams that can be relied on in case of chemical threats. Similar attention should be given to developing the requisite regional and sub- regional capacities.

Further, National Authorities need to be strong in monitoring developments within their borders. This calls for advances in national monitoring and verification capacities. National legislation and laboratories should be strengthened to play their part. We call on the OPCW to aid us in view of the rapid developments in biochemistry. To this end, we support the setting up of the research centre by the OPCW to support members.

The OPCW is and has to remain in the driving seat in coordinating all matters related to the eradication of chemical weapons.

We hope the outcome document will address the concerns that have been tabled by many delegations that seek to see the OPCW emerge stronger and more focused to meeting the needs of its members.

I request that this document be part of the official documents of this Conference.