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TURKEY

**ADDRESS BY H.E. DR AHMET DAVUTOĞLU
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AT THE THIRD REVIEW CONFERENCE**

Mr Chairman,
Mr Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,
Good afternoon,

First and foremost, Mr Chairman, allow me to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of this important Review Conference and wish you best success in these meetings.

I came here from the NPDI Ministerial Meeting where ten countries came together to work in order to help contribute to the process of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. There, I mentioned one issue and I want to repeat it here.

There are certain international issues where we should not act only as Ministers of Foreign Affairs or diplomats of individual nation States, but we should act as Interior Ministers for all humanity. While defending our national positions, we should also work together for the future of all humanity. If there is no ontological existence of humanity, the political existence of individual nation States cannot be possible. Issues like the environment, nuclear concerns, disarmament or fighting against chemical weapons are issues where all of us from different continents, from different nations, should work shoulder to shoulder in order to ensure that next generations will not be facing nuclear or chemical weapons. Therefore, it is a holy mission, and Mr Chairman, I wish you full success in this Review Conference. Because it is related to our future generations, and as Turkey, we will always be contributing and working together with international organisations to eliminate all nuclear and chemical weapons and weapons of mass destruction in this globe.

Therefore, it is an honour for me to address this Conference, where, over the next few days, most critical matters pertaining to global disarmament as well as the future role of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) will be discussed, and a way forward decided upon, by all delegations.

The Conference is taking place at a pivotal moment, with allegations of use of chemical weapons in Syria and the robust role the OPCW is expected to play in this case, being high on the international agenda. This is one topic where we anticipate comprehensive and informed discussions.



At the outset, I wish to express our deep appreciation for Director-General Üzümcü's inspired leadership and for the dedicated efforts of his entire team to transform the Organisation to effectively address the key challenges of the day; and prepare the Organisation for a new role in the coming years. Therefore, whenever I have the chance to come to The Hague, I always visit Director-General Üzümcü and this Organisation in order to get latest briefings on this Organisation's very important mission.

Achieving global disarmament and non-proliferation is a key element of Turkey's foreign and security policies.

Situated in a sensitive and ever-more volatile geopolitical environment, we are cognizant of the risks and dangers associated with weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

The complexity of our security environment is a compelling factor to seek protection from weapons of mass destruction, all forms of terrorism and ethnic separatism and to support all endeavours aimed at disarmament and non-proliferation.

Needless to say, Turkey does not wish to see any form of WMD in its region and is categorically against the possession of such weapons. With this mindset, Turkey wishes to see that the international conference on the establishment of a "WMD-free zone in the Middle East" is convened at the earliest.

Unfortunately, as you are all aware, we have reached a point where the prospect of intentional or accidental use of chemical weapons or toxic chemicals has become real.

Recent and disturbing allegations of use of chemical weapons in Syria must have alarmed all those concerned circles to this bitter fact.

The world has indeed not forgotten the horrors of chemical weapons use just across our borders in Iran and Iraq in the 1980s. The scenes of the Halabja massacre in 1988 by the dictator of that time, Saddam Hussein, are most painful reminders of the indiscriminate and inhumane nature of this weapon.

The allegations of use of chemicals in Syria must be taken very seriously and thoroughly investigated. If true, we strongly condemn their use and expect international community act immediately.

The mere existence of chemical weapons and warfare agents, to which the Syrian regime has already confessed possessing, is a matter of serious concern, foremost to Turkey and the countries in the region. I would like to remind that we are faced with a regime in Syria which has not refrained from using tanks, planes and Scud missiles against its cities and towns.

Apart from the possibility of intentional or accidental use of these agents, the prospect of such weapons falling into the hands of terrorists and other non-State actors can have devastating and far reaching effects on the security of the whole region. Transfer of such weapons or agents or even related technical know-how to third parties is also a risk that should not be discounted.

The recent events in Syria impress upon us once again the veracity of the dangers we are faced with, together with the indispensability of the OPCW as a specialist organisation.

The recent arrangements concluded between the OPCW and the United Nations for the provision of assistance and protection against chemical weapons and also to respond to requests from the United Nations Secretary-General to provide expertise for the investigation of alleged use of chemical weapons is exactly what the situation calls for.

The investigation vis-à-vis Syria should be conducted and facts revealed to the international community, as soon as possible. As the United Nations Secretary-General underlined here yesterday, all serious claims should be examined without delay, without conditions and without exceptions. However, the press reports that Syria did not welcome the United Nations team, if true, are noteworthy. Syria should accept the United Nations offer for the sake of the Syrian people and they should not be blaming others on this and they have to accept this call from the United Nations.

The recent destruction work in Libya and the current Syrian challenge constitute ample and valid justifications to maintain the chemical weapons expertise of the OPCW, even after the completion of the destruction of known stockpiles.

All I have just expressed boldly underscores the significant role the OPCW continues to play in the field of disarmament and international security.

It is therefore vital that we all promote universalisation and effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, which already stands closest to universality of all multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation regimes, with its 188 States Parties.

Current progress and success of the OPCW clearly represent the strong international stance against chemical weapons.

Indeed, this Convention is unique in terms of its capacity whereby it bans an entire category of weapons of mass destruction, and monitors implementation by means of a verification regime. As such, the Convention plays an important role in effective multilateralism and sets example for other regimes.

Alongside this great success, there are also challenges. There are yet eight States that remain outside the regime. We are calling on them to be part of this Convention immediately, as early as possible, so that they will be respectable members of the international community acting against chemical weapons.

The ultimate objective of the Convention can be attained only when these States join the fold and full universalisation is achieved.

In the interim, there are substantive issues that need to be addressed by the Organisation regarding its future functions.

A key challenge is to prevent the re-emergence of chemical weapons and the misuse of toxic chemicals.

With the considerable ground it has covered, it is my conviction that the OPCW will continue to lead the path for an eventual WMD-free world.

However, as this cannot be achieved by eliminating chemical weapons alone, it is imperative that all Member States, including nuclear ones, adopt a just and principled approach in their respective policies.

In order to contribute to this noble objective, we should first and foremost concentrate on the tasks we have at hand with respect to our Convention obligations; the most immediate one being the destruction of all chemical weapons stockpiles and their production facilities.

The current state of affairs around the world requires this Organisation to remain alert and take swift action in the case of any unexpected event concerning chemical weapons and agents.

I can assure you that, for its part, Turkey will continue to lend its full support and cooperation to the effective implementation of the Convention.

Thank you very much and best success in your holy mission to eliminate all chemical weapons in this globe.

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