



OPCW

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SLOVAKIA

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR H.E. JAROSLAV CHLEBO
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC TO THE OPCW
AT THE THIRD REVIEW CONFERENCE**

Dear Mr Chairman,
Mr Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me join the previous speakers and wish the Third Review Conference a successful course. I am also as much convinced that under the able leadership of the chairman Ambassador Krzysztof Paturej the Conference will be successful in dealing with multiple challenges that the international community is facing in its efforts to eliminate a threat of chemical weapons. Similar feelings I extend to Director-General Ambassador Üzümcü and the staff of the Technical Secretariat and would like to assure them of the continuous support of my country and delegation to their demanding job of enforcing the regime of Convention into reality.

In the time when the efforts to destroy existing stockpiles of chemical weapons continue, but also when we face the issue of alleged use of these inhuman agents in the conflict in Syria, the Third Review Conference provides a necessary space for us to evaluate the achieved results as well as to set up new goals.

Slovakia has been as an active member of the international community involved in many related activities, where the basic principles of our approach—alongside respecting an absolute priority of protection of human lives and health—are also the consistency in implementation of voluntarily assumed commitments, openness, transparency, non-discriminatory approach and interest in all-round cooperation. As a member of the European Union, Slovakia fully associates itself with the statement of Ambassador Bylica, a special envoy of the European Union to the Conference. Given that Slovakia has no serious agenda within the framework of fulfilment of its obligations under the Convention, we do not often participate in discussions. This time, however, I'd like to make an exception.

In previous weeks, we've all had an opportunity to actively participate in the work of the OEWG. I would like to express my appreciations of the way how H. E. Ambassador Nassima Baghli of Algeria discharged her duties as the Chair. It remains to hope that the constructive atmosphere of the final phase of the OEWG work will be transferred also to the Third Review Conference soil.



While taking a look at the Convention itself, the Slovak Republic is convinced that the Convention through its complexity continues to provide a sufficient mandate for an effective action by the international community to eliminate chemical weapons as the crucial goal of Convention and OPCW.

This applies despite the fact that so far we cannot say the task to destroy all stockpiles of chemical weapons has been fulfilled. However, we do not consider the situation as dramatic, whilst on the other hand constant attention is required to the quality of today's processes and decisions. We have to be fully aware of the necessity to deal not only with originally declared stockpiles of weapons, which might not be absolutely exact as one recent case showed us, but also ready to deal with those chemical agents which have not been properly covered by the Convention, especially incapacitating agents.

The real prospect of destruction of existing stockpiles of chemical weapons logically leads to reflections on the future of the Organisation. Such a discussion is absolutely legitimate; however, we should avoid what has happened to some other international organisations that have been discussing their future and reforms ineffectively for decades. For all that, from the point of view of the Slovak Republic, the consistent implementation of the Convention at the national level and the effective functioning of the OPCW itself seem to be of utmost importance and up-to-date as a topic.

Mr Chairman, we often encounter the theme of the universality of the Convention within the policy-making organs of the OPCW. This topic received urgency recently in connection with the alleged use of chemical weapons in Syria. While expressing Slovakia's full support to the investigation of the alleged use of chemical weapons, it is a sad acknowledgement that sending the fact-finding mission to this country is seriously delaying what may preclude acquisition of basic facts about these incidents. As a small comfort only to me comes from the wording used by the honourable United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon during his address to the Conference who considers any use of chemical weapons as a crime against humanity and not only violation of "international community legal norms and standards" which is a formula used within the frame of our Organisation.

One can only agree with the observation that above all there is a need to improve the implementation of the Convention at the national level. Due to the persistent shortages and lack of progress since the last Review Conference, it is more than justified to demand the enforcement of generally accepted standards more strictly. Certainly, regular attention by the Executive Council to the lack of national implementation of the Convention in particular States Parties, as well as sharing "the best practices", could help. Therefore, it would be appropriate to elaborate "the best practice handbook", in which experience with the implementation of the Convention could also be captured in order to maintain "the institutional memory".

Earlier, I've mentioned that Slovakia responsibly fulfils its obligations under the Convention. It has no stockpiles of chemical weapons, chemical production is continuously monitored, and all the tasks to implement obligations into the national legislation have been complied with. The result of this situation is that the activities at the national level may focus on issues related to assistance and cooperation with other partners in the international community. Article X and its implementation will continue to be in the future the main object of our efforts, given that our intention is to move over the bilateral format of cooperation towards its regional dimension, so thereby Central and Eastern European countries can more effectively

contribute by their work into the overall mosaic of efforts to eliminate the threats associated with chemical weapons. Broader engagement in the area of assistance and protection and also preparedness against misuse of toxic chemicals would increase the OPCW's relevance and interest among the States Parties.

Mr Chairman,

Slovakia is ready to actively and selflessly participate in works focused on rather consistent enforcement of the Convention obligations in relation to the States Parties to the Convention, assistance and cooperation with them at this regard.

At the end of my address, let me ask you to issue this address as an official document of the conference. Thank you for your attention.

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