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NEW ZEALAND

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR GEORGE TROUP
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE OPCW
AT THE THIRD REVIEW CONFERENCE**

Mr Chairman,

Thank you for this opportunity to speak during the general debate at the Third Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention. My delegation would like to congratulate you on your appointment as Chair. We wish you well in your work. I would also like to thank Ambassador Baghli for her contribution in chairing the Open-Ended Working Group, the Director-General Üzümcü and the OPCW's Technical Secretariat for making the arrangements for this Third Review Conference.

The Director-General and the Technical Secretariat can take considerable satisfaction from the widespread recognition of the value of the expertise that has been developed within the Organisation.

The words and presence of the United Nations Secretary-General here yesterday, reflect the significant achievements of the Convention in moving towards a world free of chemical weapons and as a bulwark against re-emergence. As the Secretary-General said, we must also remain clear-eyed about the challenges.

New Zealand sees this conference as an important opportunity to reflect on the contribution the Chemical Weapons Convention has made to disarmament, non-proliferation, and security around the globe over the past five years. More importantly, it is also the time to deliver guidance on how this organisation should contribute to the world's security and stability over the next five years.

This Third Review Conference comes at a crucial time in the history of the Convention and this organisation. For the first time since the Convention entered into force, the OPCW will be involved in an investigation into the alleged use of chemical weapons. The alleged use of these weapons in Syria is a deeply troubling development. As we gather here in The Hague for the Third Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention the world is watching us. We must send a clear message of our collective concern over the alleged use of chemical weapons in Syria. New Zealand strongly supports the OPCW contributing technical expertise to the United Nation-led investigation in Syria. We urge all Syrian parties to facilitate the investigation and to cooperate fully with it.



This conference must also condemn—in the strongest possible terms—the threat of any use of chemical weapons in Syria, or elsewhere. As the Director-General said yesterday, “the Review Conference must issue a clarion call that chemical weapons stand totally condemned.”

The threat of use of chemical weapons in Syria, on top of a deteriorating security situation, presents a grave threat to peace and stability in the region and is in direct conflict with our Organisation’s goal of bringing about a world free of chemical weapons. This is the immediate challenge that we face.

Mr Chairman, these current developments in Syria, a State not Party to the Convention, demonstrate in stark terms the importance of achieving full universality of the Convention. We commend the five States that have acceded to the Convention since the last Review Conference and call for the eight remaining States which have not signed the Convention to accede without delay.

While universality of the Convention remains a priority aspiration over the next five years, the full implementation of the Convention’s provisions by the signatories is an equally important objective. It is implementation that is fundamental to the successful operation of the Convention and the realisation of its aims.

New Zealand knows, given our close relationships with our Pacific Island neighbours, the challenges faced by small and developing States with limited resources in implementing the Convention. Targeted assistance with implementation of the complex obligations in the Convention will therefore continue to be required. We ask the Technical Secretariat to continue its outreach in different regions over the next five years, and to dedicate the appropriate resources and expertise to help States Parties achieve full implementation. For our part, New Zealand will continue to promote the goal of achieving full implementation of the Convention in our region.

We recognise that this next five-year period will see further rebalancing of effort and resources from destruction to preventing proliferation, the re-emergence of chemical weapons, and the acquisition of toxic chemicals by non-State actors. My delegation believes that it would be of value to the OPCW for States Parties to set targets for its activities and results over the coming five years, as a benchmark against which its effectiveness can be measured.

As we look forward to the next five years, we recognise that the nature of the organisation needs to evolve in response to changes in the world around us. My delegation views developments in science and technology as central to the evolution of the OPCW, and particularly relevant to the verification work of the Technical Secretariat.

The convergence of chemistry and biology will also pose challenges to the Convention. The dissemination of advances in science and technology could place the acquisition of weapons and toxic chemicals more easily within reach of non-State actors. Therefore we fully support strengthening the OPCW’s role to identify, monitor and report on relevant developments in science and technology.

The draft document prepared by the Open-Ended Working Group for transmitting to the Review Conference represents a great deal of work by the permanent delegations and

provides us with a platform at the start of this conference. My delegation hopes that it will be possible to build further on this document by agreeing on a sharply focused, forward looking political declaration with impact on the world audience. We do not often have this opportunity to set out clearly what we stand for.

We were pleased to see the decision taken this morning enabling 70 non-governmental organisations to participate in this Third Review Conference, up from the 28 that participated in 2008. Civil society has an important role to play in broadening the interface between the work that we do here and the wider international community. New Zealand therefore welcomes the inclusive participation of civil society groups within the OPCW and we look forward to the contributions.

Mr Chairman, I would like to re-state New Zealand's full support for the Convention and for the OPCW. New Zealand is strongly committed to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

This organisation has done much work over the last five years that we can be proud of, but now, during the next two weeks, we must focus our attention on the challenges our organisation will face over the next five years. Only in that way will we convincingly move towards our objective of a world genuinely free of chemical weapons.

I ask that this statement be treated as an official document of this session of the conference.

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