



OPCW

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ENGLISH and SPANISH only

PANAMA

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR JOSÉ MANUEL TERÁN SITTÓN
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE OPCW
AT THE THIRD REVIEW CONFERENCE**

Allow me, Mr Chairman of the Third Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, to align myself with the statements of those who have taken the floor before me and to congratulate you on your election. We extend these congratulations to all of the members of the General Committee, and trust that the results achieved during this Conference will be positive.

I have great satisfaction in addressing you in this, my first intervention as Permanent Representative of the Republic of Panama to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

It is of the utmost importance to the Republic of Panama to evaluate commitments relating to the Convention, commitments that include the regime for general and complete disarmament¹, non-proliferation, and advice and the international exchange of science and technology², to build levels of trust which will help to maintain global peace.

Just as we support the free exchange of knowledge in the application of chemistry for purposes not prohibited, and in view of the changes that have taken place on a global level, it is necessary boldly to support the constant monitoring mechanisms in the technical processes for the destruction of chemical weapons³, giving training to the staff of this Organisation, and to officials of the States Parties, in the relevant areas, including legal instruments, with a view to addressing this matter.

We echo the words of the Director-General⁴ in relation to the importance of an efficient and reliable verification process for world security in terms of the misuse of toxic chemicals for

¹ Preamble to the Convention: Determined to act with a view to achieving effective progress towards general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control, including the prohibition and elimination of all types of weapons of mass destruction.

² Paragraph 21 (h), Article VIII of the Convention: “to render specialized advice in areas of science and technology relevant to this Convention, to the Conference, the Executive Council or States Parties”.

³ Verification Annex, Part III, Section B (Standing Arrangements), paragraph 11: “monitoring of the technological process of the destruction of chemical weapons”.

⁴ This effective and reliable global verification system is supported by all 188 States Parties and provides assurances regarding both the disarmament process and legitimate chemical activities. It is key to ensuring that chemical weapons never re-emerge and, more generally, to promoting confidence among



purposes prohibited by the Convention, with the aim of preventing their use or the re-emergence of chemical weapons production. The crisis involving Syria reminds us of the urgent need to remain vigilant to prevent the use of prohibited chemical weapons in war, or for other purposes which violate people's human rights.

In the case of Panama, to which the Director-General referred in his Note by the Technical Secretariat⁵, submitted to this Conference, in cases where States Parties⁶ to this Convention (the United States of America, Canada and the United Kingdom) conducted experiments during the Second World War which are prohibited by the Convention, using bombs containing chemicals, which remain lethal, the matter of destroying these chemical weapons, abandoned on Isla San José, which is situated in the Pearl Islands in the Pacific Ocean, has yet to be settled. This represents a latent risk to human life, animals and the environment, as well as limiting the island's potential for development for tourism.

The Republic of Panama, as a Territorial State Party⁷ and in compliance with the obligations established in the Convention, will resume diplomatic talks with the United States of America with a view to reaching an agreement. We are confident that good faith will prevail, putting an end to our differences.

The specific case of Isla San José illustrates the need to take steps that legitimise the decisions which promote the fulfilment of the obligations contracted by States Parties to this Convention, as well as the implementation of the obligations relating to declarations with data on the import and export of prohibited chemicals and universal access to chemicals for peaceful and humanitarian purposes. It is essential, therefore, to keep in force this international consensus in the face of threats which cause unresolved conflict and controversy.

We cannot conclude our statement, Mr Chairman, without first underlining the fact that this Conference is bringing universal adherence closer, with the participation of 188 States Parties, a figure that represents one of the highest rates of adherence to an international instrument. Another singular accomplishment of the Conference and of the Secretariat, which we should like to thank for its efforts and commitment, is having achieved a reduction of 78.67%⁸ in declared chemical weapons.

States Parties. The Convention's verification regime supplements States Parties' own measures aimed at preventing toxic chemicals being used for prohibited purposes.

⁵ RC-3/S/1, dated 12 March 2013, paragraph 3.127: "The destruction of the eight CW items declared by Panama as abandoned and verified by the Secretariat in 2002 has not yet started."

⁶ Final inspection report ACW/15/02-U and Technical assistance report TAV/02/01-P 116475, 116474 (both in English only).

⁷ Convention, Regime for Abandoned Chemical Weapons: "A State Party on whose territory there are abandoned chemical weapons (hereinafter referred to as the "Territorial State Party")".

⁸ The Director-General stated, with regard to the destruction of chemical weapons: "Progress towards the elimination of all declared chemical weapons stockpiles has been made, with approximately three-quarters of the declared stockpiles destroyed to date. In total, 69,430.336 metric tonnes (MTs) of Category 1 chemical weapons have been declared by the possessor States Parties. Of this amount, as at 31 December 2012, 54,620 MTs (78.67%) of Category 1 chemical weapons have been destroyed under strict verification by the Secretariat. In addition to Albania, which completed the destruction of all its declared chemical weapons in July 2007, two other States Parties (A State Party and India) completed the destruction of all their chemical weapons in July 2008 and March 2009, respectively. Libya has destroyed 51.15%, the Russian Federation has destroyed 70.10%, and the United States of America 89.75% of their respective declared quantities."

The Republic of Panama echoes, once more, the expressions of confidence in the work being done by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, this confidence being the cornerstone in areas of security and international cooperation.

The Republic of Panama requests that this statement be translated into the official languages of the Convention, that it be an official statement of the Conference, and that it be published on the website of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

Thank you very much.

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