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**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

**STATEMENT BY ROSE E. GOTTEMOELLER  
ACTING UNDER SECRETARY FOR ARMS CONTROL AND  
INTERNATIONAL SECURITY  
AT THE THIRD REVIEW CONFERENCE**

Mr Chairman,  
Mr Director-General,  
Distinguished delegates,

Let me begin by pledging to you the complete support of the delegation of the United States of America to make this a highly productive and successful Review Conference.

I want to welcome you as the Chairman of the Review Conference. I have every confidence in your ability to guide us skilfully to a meaningful outcome, with a clear vision to guide the Organisation over the next five years. I would also like to express my appreciation to our Director-General, Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü, and through him, to all of our colleagues in the Technical Secretariat.

The Third Review Conference convenes at an important moment in the history of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Over the last fifteen years much has already been accomplished in achieving the goals of the Convention. Tens of thousands of tons of chemical agents and millions of munitions have been destroyed by the possessor States. The Technical Secretariat has earned a well-deserved reputation as a highly capable and respected international organisation, having conducted literally thousands of inspections. The policy-making organs have played a prominent role in overseeing the Convention, successfully resolving many implementation issues.

Yet, there is still much unfinished business. Chemical weapons stockpiles have been dramatically reduced, but not yet completely eliminated. The membership of the Convention, while robust, is not universal, and conflict is taking place in a country that has admitted to possessing chemical weapons. Even among States Parties, many have not fully implemented their national obligations, diminishing the security benefits for all States Parties. Furthermore, much work remains on protective assistance and international cooperation. As if these challenges were not enough, looming ahead is the uncharted post-destruction era. We must begin now to anticipate and prepare for the longer term, for a period of unlimited duration. If we successfully eliminate all chemical weapons only to have them return in the hands of new actors, we will see our historic success undermined and devalued.



Having outlined the challenges that lie ahead, I will try to shine a light down each of those paths. To begin with, I want to stress that for the United States, the total destruction of our chemical weapons will remain a key objective. To date, we have destroyed nearly 90% of our Category 1 chemical weapons. We are making steady progress in preparing two destruction facilities to destroy the last 10% of the United States stockpile. The United States welcomes the decision taken by the Conference of the States Parties in December 2011 regarding the chemical weapons destruction deadline. We are fully committed to achieving 100% destruction of our chemical weapons as soon as practicable, consistent with the Convention's imperatives of public safety, environmental protection, and international transparency and oversight. Moreover, we are committed to helping other possessor States destroy their chemical weapons. We have provided financial and technical assistance to Russia and Albania. Most recently, we have been assisting Libya in planning for the destruction of the chemical weapons previously hidden by the Qadhafi regime. As the United States has emphasised previously, we, like other States Parties, remain concerned about the origin of these chemical weapons stocks. We look forward to any additional information that the Libyan Government and the Technical Secretariat can provide to the Member States that addresses where the recently discovered chemical weapons were produced, as well as what chemical agent they contain.

Bringing all remaining non-Member States into the Convention, especially those that possess chemical weapons, is essential to realise the Convention's objectives. All of us must continue to stress that there is no justification for any country to keep the option to have chemical weapons. The OPCW and States Parties must actively engage each of the eight remaining States not Party at all levels.

There is another kind of problem that the Convention is facing regarding global implementation. Less than 50% of the 188 States Parties have fully implemented the national measures required under Article VII and fifteen of these States Parties have chemical industries. Many of those without chemical industries have not put in place the penal legislation intended by the Convention to deny terrorists access to toxic chemicals and weapons technologies. The First and Second Review Conferences expressed concern about this situation. The Third Review Conference must address this problem with the goal of universal implementation of the Convention by all of its States Parties.

The United States is all too familiar with implementation issues, as attested to by the problems we encountered in completing destruction of our chemical weapons stockpile and we have an understanding of the national implementation issues faced by States Parties. Indeed, the history of the implementation of this Convention by its policy-making organs and its States Parties is one of constructive engagement, resourceful diplomacy, and shared goodwill. The United States and the other possessor States benefited from this enlightened approach to resolving implementation issues, culminating in the decision on destruction at the Sixteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties. A similar model could be followed with respect to Article VII implementation. Let us together at this Conference begin working on a common approach for addressing the Article VII requirements and charge the Executive Council and the Conference of the States Parties with a mandate to develop an agreed proactive strategy to build Member States' capacity to implement Article VII.

Article XI's call for cooperation in the peaceful uses of chemistry is of great importance to all States Parties. We all need this Article—we all own this Article. Indeed, in addition to the 10% year-over-year increase in the regular budget for Article XI, the United States, for example, has contributed more than USD 550,000 for developing best practices in chemical

safety and security across the globe. We will soon co-host with the OPCW a workshop for African National Authorities, and our contribution to this effort is more than USD 150,000. The Conference of the States Parties decision, reached in December 2011, on components for an agreed framework remains to be carried out by the States Parties. We are ready to do so. Now is the time for action to implement this important decision on Article XI.

To exclude completely the threat of the use of chemical weapons, it is not enough to destroy existing weapons and for all nations to accede to the Convention. We must also prevent the re-emergence of chemical weapons, whether in the hands of States or in the hands of non-State actors. In future years, the world will continue to look to the OPCW as the international body for strengthening security against the threat of chemical weapons. The Technical Secretariat must continue to enhance its chemical weapons-related knowledge and expertise to be able to respond to current and future threats.

There is much to be done to prepare for the post-destruction era and the challenges both known and unknown that it will present. Switzerland and the International Committee of the Red Cross have sought to sensitise the international community to one of those challenges—the implications of so-called incapacitating chemical agents—for the Chemical Weapons Convention. Concern has increased that illicit programmes could possibly be concealed under the guise of a legitimate treaty purpose, such as law enforcement. The Convention is clear: the development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, or use of incapacitating chemical agents—or any other toxic chemicals—in types and quantities inconsistent with purposes not prohibited by the Chemical Weapons Convention, is clearly prohibited by Article I of the Convention. Nevertheless, we must all be vigilant to ensure that incapacitating chemical agents and other technologies do not jeopardise the twin goals of the Convention—the destruction of all chemical weapons and the prevention of the re-emergence of chemical weapons.

We must remember that this Convention is of unlimited duration and that, after destruction is complete, the mission of preventing re-emergence will endure. If we allow complacency to replace commitment, if we fail to adapt the OPCW to new technologies and new security threats, future generations may very well suffer the same atrocities caused by chemical weapons in World War I, the Iran-Iraq War and the Tokyo subway attacks. We cannot allow the Convention to become outdated and irrelevant.

As we gather here in support of a Convention dedicated to excluding completely the possibility of the use of chemical weapons, there is a serious threat to that shared vision from a non-State Party that we must not ignore. Last July, the Government of Syria publicly acknowledged it possesses a stockpile of chemical weapons and threatened to use them against so-called “external aggression.” Such an act on the part of the Government of Syria would be contrary to the legal obligation it has under the 1925 Geneva Protocol never to use chemical weapons in war. President Obama has made it clear that the use of chemical weapons in Syria would be a game-changer from our perspective, and could have enormous spillover effects across the region. The United Nations Secretary-General, our own Director-General, world leaders, and the OPCW Executive Council have all emphasised that the use of chemical weapons by anyone in Syria would be reprehensible and contrary to international law and standards.

The most critical question we face at this Review Conference concerns what we as States Parties can collectively do to address a manifest chemical weapons threat from a non-State Party. The United States believes there is much that this Conference can and should do. This Conference should begin by candidly recognising the facts and including a strong declaration

in its report. The Government of Syria has a chemical weapons arsenal and made clear its willingness to use it. Moreover, the instability and volatility of the escalating violence in Syria could increase the risk of use, intentional or unintentional; transfer; or the acquisition of chemical weapons or chemical material by a non-State actor, any and all of which could have devastating effects on Syria's border nations and the entire region. The situation in Syria clearly constitutes a serious threat to international peace and security. This Conference should call on the Government of Syria to give up its chemical weapons by joining the Convention without delay and destroying its arsenal under international verification.

As we work towards Syrian accession to the Convention as the best outcome, prudence and our responsibilities under the Convention require that we also plan for the worst. The States Parties to the Convention, as envisioned under Article X, must fully prepare to assist fellow States Parties attacked by or threatened with chemical weapons. Moreover, all States Parties must stand ready to render whatever humanitarian assistance they can to victims if chemical weapons are used in Syria or in any of the border countries.

The Conference should welcome the Secretary-General's efforts regarding an investigation into the possible use of chemical weapons. The United States supports an OPCW-assisted investigation by the United Nations into any and all credible allegations of chemical weapons use in Syria. We demand the full cooperation of the Assad regime in particular, as well as Syrian authorities throughout the country, including by providing full and unfettered access to all relevant individuals and locations. The Conference should commend the Director-General for reaching an understanding with the United Nations on a Supplementary Arrangement for implementation of the Relationship Agreement between the OPCW and the United Nations, which has paved the way for the Technical Secretariat to assist the United Nations with the current investigation. As the United Nations proceeds with these efforts, we will also continue to work closely with our partners to obtain further information regarding any and all credible allegations of the potential or actual use of chemical weapons in Syria.

In joining the Chemical Weapons Convention, we have dedicated ourselves to the common vision of a world free of chemical weapons and to a shared commitment set out in the Convention's preamble "... for the sake of all mankind, to exclude completely the possibility of the use of chemical weapons ....". The world is now faced with the very real possibility of chemical weapons use having occurred in Syria. This Conference cannot turn a blind eye to this grave situation on the pretext that it involves a non-State Party or that the subject is too controversial—the treaty specifically contemplates this challenge. The undeniable truth is that the threat of use or the actual use of chemical weapons by anyone is a threat to us all.

This Conference must embrace its international responsibility, and in its words and in its actions defend that vision of a world free of the scourge of chemical weapons. If this Conference remains silent on the Syria chemical weapons threat, it will be a silence heard around the world; indeed, a silence most clearly heard by those who oppose that vision and would use chemical weapons to the detriment of all mankind.

In closing, I request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Third Review Conference.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.