



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Third Review Conference
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IRELAND

**STATEMENT BY H.E. MARY WHELAN
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRELAND TO THE OPCW
AT THE THIRD REVIEW CONFERENCE**

Mr Chairman,

Ireland aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union.

I wish at the outset to express my congratulations to you on your election and also to all the members of the bureau. I look forward to working closely with you to bring this Review Conference to a successful conclusion. Ambassador Baghli of Algeria deserves particular thanks for her work in the Open-Ended Working Group which prepared the draft outcome documents for the Conference.

I also wish to express the appreciation of my delegation to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Ban Ki-moon, for his address to the Conference—his attendance reflects the importance he attaches to the work of this Organisation.

Mr Chairman, we are meeting at a time of particular challenge to our goal of a world free of chemical weapons. Syria's possession of chemical weapons and the allegations that chemical weapons have been used in Syria are of enormous concern to us all. We must find an adequate way to address that concern in this Review Conference. Ireland fully supports the decision of the United Nations Secretary-General to investigate these allegations. The investigation must have secure and unfettered access in order to conduct its work. It must also be able to rely on the full cooperation of all parties in order to determine all the facts relating to the allegations of use of chemical weapons. I wish also to commend the Director-General and his staff for the steps they have taken to support the investigation. Ireland calls on Syria to take all necessary steps to ensure that its chemical weapons can never be used and are destroyed under independent verification.

Mr Chairman, we must reinvigorate our efforts to achieve universal adherence to the Convention. It is our view that achieving our common goal of a world free of chemical weapons will not only enhance global security in its own right, but it will also contribute to the wider goal of achieving a world free of all weapons of mass destruction.

In the meantime we recall that the provisions of the 1925 Geneva Protocol and customary International Law apply also in those States which have not yet signed and ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention.



We remain concerned that the main possessor States have not been able to complete their destruction within the deadlines established by the Convention, and encourage them to do their utmost to achieve complete destruction, in accordance with the relevant decision of the Sixteenth Conference of the States Parties, as quickly as possible. We are confident that they will do so.

The Convention imposes obligations on all States Parties and, unless these are fully met, the Convention cannot achieve its full potential. It is a matter of increasing concern that progress, with regard to States Parties adopting comprehensive implementing legislation to meet their obligations under the Convention, has stalled. We need to reinvigorate our collective efforts to address this problem. While the primary responsibility rests with individual States Parties to meet their obligations, the Technical Secretariat must consider how it can improve the effectiveness of its support activities in order to ensure that these are effective. Ireland agrees with the recent emphasis placed on developing a 'tailor-made' approach.

Mr Chairman, as this is a Review Conference we must look at a broader range of issues than we would normally consider in the cycle of the Conferences of the States Parties. We must, for instance, consider how changes in the global security situation and developments in science and technology impact on the Convention and how we should respond to these developments. Our Convention is an ongoing commitment to ensure a world free of chemical weapons. It must adapt to changes in its external environment if it is to remain effective.

The work of the Scientific Advisory Board is an important resource for the Organisation. We should take full advantage of its work. Ireland also notes its conclusions in relation to incapacitating agents. We share the concerns which have been expressed in relation to the potential use of incapacitating agents from both a humanitarian and legal perspective. We support the proposals made at this Conference to initiate a discussion on this topic.

Developments in science and technology are also blurring the boundaries between chemistry and biology. Prudence dictates closer cooperation between the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention regimes.

The Advisory Panel on Future Priorities of the OPCW provided an important independent analysis of the achievements and challenges presented to the Convention's regime. It suggested what needed to be done. We draw inspiration from its work. Ireland also believes that the OPCW needs to consider how it carries out its work. In this regard, we believe that there is room to improve the effectiveness and efficacy of the manner in which our policy-making bodies operate. There is also a need to adopt a less defensive and more open and welcoming approach to the involvement of industry, academia and civil society representatives in our work.

Mr Chairman, we face a substantial task over these two weeks. We equally bear a substantial responsibility. The difficulty of identifying the ambitious steps needed to maintain the integrity of the Convention is proportional to the reward. We look forward to working with you in the coming days to achieve the best possible outcome for this Organisation. I request that this statement be treated as an official document of this session of the Conference.