



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Third Review Conference
8 – 19 April 2013

RC-3/NAT.57
19 April 2013
ENGLISH and FRENCH only

SWITZERLAND

**STATEMENT BY PHILIPPE BRANDT
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SWITZERLAND TO THE OPCW
AT THE CLOSING SESSION OF THE THIRD REVIEW CONFERENCE**

Mr Chairman,

On behalf of the Swiss delegation I would like to congratulate you on the conclusion and adoption of the final report of this Third Review Conference of the OPCW. After several months of preparation and two weeks of intensive work, we are in a position, due to the flexibility and the efforts shown by all the delegations present in The Hague, to adopt a consensual text, which provides the Organisation with guidance for the upcoming years. Switzerland highly appreciates this collective effort.

We attach high importance to the work of the OPCW, an organisation whose success is beyond all question and which can count on Switzerland's support in the future. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat for their excellent work and their commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation.

Allow me to highlight two points which are of particular importance to the Swiss delegation.

First of all with regard to Syria, Switzerland, as indicated in its national statement during the general debate, is extremely preoccupied by the current situation and by the inexpressible misery the Syrian population has to bear. The allegations of use of chemical weapons are particularly alarming and Switzerland urges all parties involved in the conflict not to make use of such weapons. My country firmly stands behind the United Nations Secretary-General's efforts and strongly supports a full, independent and impartial investigation in close cooperation with the OPCW. The final declaration contains a reference to the situation in Syria. Switzerland—which joins the consensus—shares the views of several previous speakers and highly regrets that the final text does not express a more vigorous support for the proposed measures of the Secretary-General. At this stage of the war in Syria, the international community has the responsibility to ensure that chemical weapons will never be used and that their stockpiles will be safeguarded immediately. Additionally international justice has to play its role.

Secondly Mr Chairperson, concerning incapacitating chemical agents, my delegation would like to express its deep disappointment at the outcome of this Third Review Conference. At the final stage of the conference we failed to insert a paragraph into the document, which would have allowed to initiate a discussion regarding these toxic chemicals in the context of the OPCW. I would like to stress that this issue is of the highest importance for Switzerland.



For the last 15 years our experts have been dedicating their work to this field even though—and I would like to stress this—the issue of incapacitants does not constitute a particular national interest for my country. We are motivated by the threat to the integrity of the Convention that arises from the use of those substances for law enforcement. Our disappointment is enhanced by the fact that for several years the only thing we ask for is the initiation of a discussion on incapacitants, open to all States Parties and without prejudging any possible outcome. Nevertheless Mr Chairperson, on the bright side, discussions on incapacitants have been launched, despite the lack of reference in the final document. Due to the increasing support we could experience during the last months the momentum has been built. Consequently we will continue our efforts in order to further develop it. I would like to thank all the delegations for their support and encouragement, especially those who had difficulties with our initiative at the beginning.

Let me conclude, Mr Chairperson, by thanking all participants for their contribution to the success of the Third Review Conference. I would like to especially thank the Ambassadors of Algeria, Iraq and South Africa, as well as Santiago Oñate.

I request that this statement be circulated as an official document of this conference.

Thanks Mr Chairperson.

- - - 0 - - -