



**OPCW**

**Conference of the States Parties**

Third Review Conference  
8 – 19 April 2013

RC-3/NAT.77  
9 April 2013  
ENGLISH only

**ZIMBABWE**

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR MARY MARGARET MUCHADA  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ZIMBABWE  
TO THE BENELUX COUNTRIES, TO THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE OPCW  
AT THE THIRD REVIEW CONFERENCE**

As I take the floor for the first time, allow me to pay tribute to you, Ambassador Krzysztof Paturej. My delegation commends the way you are conducting the business of this Conference. First and foremost, I wish to assure you of the importance my delegation attaches to this Review Conference.

We are encouraged that the world has given this conference the attention it deserves. Seeing the United Nations Secretary-General and many dignitaries at the official opening spoke volumes about this commitment.

Zimbabwe associates itself fully with the statement delivered on behalf of the NAM CWC States Parties and China by the Honourable Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran. We further commit ourselves to the position pronounced on behalf of the Africa Group of States Parties by H.E. Sirajuddin Hamid Yousif, Permanent Representative of the Sudan. In the same vein, we join the entire Conference in applauding the preparatory work carried out by the Open-Ended Working Group under the able stewardship of H.E Ambassador Nassima Baghli of Algeria.

Mr Chairman,

The past 15 years have been intuitive to all of us. We are encouraged by the realisation that everyone is calling for the universality of the Convention and that this meeting is appalled by the fact that chemical weapons may have been put to use during the current conflict in Syria. Zimbabwe deplores such acts as very reprehensible. We therefore support efforts to investigate the allegations and that the investigation should be undertaken in a balanced and objective manner.

My country has in the past suffered the effects of chemical and biological warfare and understands only too well the long-term harm that these chemicals bring to the victims and society. In Zimbabwe, the effects of the napalm bomb used by the enemy during its war of liberation in the 1970s are still being felt as proof of the disaster, lack of restraint and recklessness. This experience constantly reminds us of the imperative to rid the world of all chemical weapons as well as prevent their re-emergence.



Like others, we all dream of a world without chemical weapons and stand ready to implement our obligations so as to ensure that the objectives of the Convention are realised. In that regard, we therefore wish to see complete destruction of all existing stockpiles of such weapons still in the hands of possessor States.

Zimbabwe supports the peaceful uses of chemistry and to this end, looks forward to States Parties emerging from this Conference with strong commitment and resolve to implement the Convention. It is incumbent upon us all to ensure that the outcome of the review will complement the noble objective of freeing this world from unintended uses of chemical weapons while advancing the peaceful uses of chemistry.

We are very grateful for the training that has been offered to many Zimbabwean experts. We have developed a pool of experts we can rely on in delivering OPCW national objectives. Zimbabwe recently held a meeting of all OPCW alumni and took stock of what outcome we would like from this conference. It was encouraging to see how far we have come.

It is our firm belief that national security will be guaranteed when the National Authorities have the required capacities to monitor developments within their borders. We therefore would like to see the Programme for Africa strengthened and more resources accorded to a strong technical cooperation programme that would help some of us to develop strong national capacities. For instance, at the national level it is critical to have rapid result teams that can be relied on in case of chemical threats. Similar attention should be given to developing the requisite regional and subregional capacities.

Further, National Authorities need to be strong in monitoring developments within their borders. This calls for advances in national monitoring and verification capacities. National legislation and laboratories should be strengthened to play their part. We call on the OPCW to aid us in view of the rapid developments in biochemistry. To this end, we support the setting up of the research centre by the OPCW to support members.

The OPCW is and has to remain in the driving seat in coordinating all matters related to the eradication of chemical weapons.

We hope the outcome document will address the concerns that have been tabled by many delegations that seek to see the OPCW emerge stronger and more focused to meeting the needs of its members.

I request that this document be part of the official documents of this Conference.

- - - 0 - - -