



STATEMENT AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
H.E. AMBASSADOR NICOLE SHAMPAINE
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE
OPCW AT THE ONE HUNDRED AND TENTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Chairperson, Director General, Colleagues,

As we work together to advance the pillars upon which the Chemical Weapons Convention stands –**enhancing effective national implementation of the Convention, verifiably eliminating chemical weapons and their production facilities, and preventing the reemergence and use of chemical weapons** - I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the strong commitment of the United States of America to these pillars.

When it comes to promoting implementation of the CWC, just two months ago, the United States, in collaboration with Argentina’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, co-hosted a workshop to enhance the capacity of 13 GRULAC countries to detect, respond to, and prosecute chemical attacks, with a focus on threats and attacks by non-state actors.

This workshop featured expert briefings, panel discussions, and a tabletop exercise simulating a terrorist plot. Participants were equipped with practical tools to strengthen national and regional preparedness and lay the foundation for GRULAC countries to establish sustainable systems for long-term implementation of the Convention. This event complemented numerous programs we support around the world to help countries protect their populations against the threat of chemical terrorism.

We must work together at the OPCW to deter the use of chemical weapons and the use of riot control agents as a method of warfare. Opposing “the use of chemical weapons anywhere, by anyone, at any time” is more consequential than merely claiming “this is unacceptable.” We call on States Parties to ensure that chemical weapon threats and attacks do not go unchallenged, and that States Parties that violate the Convention are held to account.

We also call on states to support the OPCW in undertaking the historic mission to determine what remains of the Assad regime’s chemical weapons program and to ensure the elimination of any remnants of this heinous program. We join the vast majority of States Parties in welcoming the progress that has been made by the Syrian government and the OPCW since last December towards bringing the dark chapter of Assad’s chemical weapons program to a close. We acknowledge the determination and hard work of Syria, the Secretariat, and its inspectors to move forward towards this objective.

It is critical that Members of the Executive Council take appropriate steps to enable Syria and the OPCW to verifiably destroy any remnants found in line with the Convention and in a way that minimizes proliferation risk. I urge all EC members to support adoption of the decision before us. We also join others in reiterating the importance of the OPCW and the Syrians supporting their important mission to be able to operate fully and safely on the ground.

We all must support bilateral efforts, consistent with the Chemical Weapons Convention, to address violations of the Convention, as my government is doing with the government of Sudan. It is our strong hope that, through this engagement, Sudan will come back into compliance with the Convention and never use chemical weapons again.

We also must oppose Russia’s extensive and increasing use of chemical weapons and riot control agents as a method of warfare in Ukraine. Ukrainian soldiers are being attacked with chemical weapons and riot control agents that suffocate them. And Russia’s use of these weapons, strictly prohibited by the Chemical Weapons Convention, has increased dramatically. Ukraine has now reported over 10,000 chemical attacks, often targeting those in their protected positions who risk choking to death or are forced to flee into the open where Russia’s forces can kill them.

It is clear that chemical weapons programs remain a threat. We should not ignore that Iran – a country which continues to proliferate weapons to terrorist groups and other non-state actors – is developing pharmaceutical-based agents for offensive purposes as part of a chemical weapons program. Iran's development of chemical weapons is prohibited by the Convention and increases the threat of use of chemical weapons.

The United States remains a steadfast and strong partner to those committed to preventing the use of chemical weapons by state or non-state actors. And we look forward to working with you to ensure we collectively uphold the Chemical Weapons Convention and bequeath to future generations a world free of chemical weapons. But we must all redouble our efforts to seek accountability. The majority of this Council is united in speaking out against the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, at any time. But words alone, as we have seen, are not enough to deter the use of chemical weapons or the pursuit of chemical weapons programs.

As the United States, Director-General Arias, and many other delegations here today have noted, the threat of reemergence of chemical weapons is real and growing. We must be resolved to seek accountability – real accountability that will deter future use – for any use of chemical weapons. This is the challenge we must all meet together if we are to stop and reverse this reemergence.

Thank you.