



ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION  
OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS

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*The Chemical Weapons Convention:  
Progress to Date*

STATEMENT BY

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OF THE  
ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS

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Professor de Zwaan,  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am very grateful to Professor de Zwaan and the Clingendael Institute for organising this function and enabling me to share with a distinguished audience my thoughts and reflections as I prepare to relinquish my responsibilities as the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

During my privileged association with the OPCW, the Institute has consistently extended its cooperation to the Organisation. It has organised and facilitated a number of important joint activities, enabling debate and exchanges among the academic and diplomatic communities on important issues related to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and to our work. For that I am deeply grateful. On our part, we have regularly hosted briefings to groups of international participants attending this prestigious Dutch institution and I am sure that the OPCW's doors will always remain open to such activities.

Moreover, the Clingendael Institute is a mirror of the spirit that inspires this great country, the Netherlands, where the OPCW is privileged to have its headquarters. The active support of the Kingdom of the Netherlands has greatly helped our work and our ability to function properly. This is no surprise, given the exemplary dedication of the Netherlands to the promotion of international law, peace, justice, security and effective multilateralism.

Distinguished friends,

Many of you will already be familiar with the OPCW's work. What I intend to address today is how it contributes to our collective efforts towards a safe and secure world. I will refer also to the significant challenges lying ahead, for, although the OPCW has already made great progress - and I certainly take some personal satisfaction in that - much remains to be done.

The CWC is widely recognised as a groundbreaking treaty and its implementation is seen both as precedent setting and as a notable example of effective multilateralism at work. At the same time, the OPCW has become a respected and well-recognised member of the international security, disarmament and non-proliferation community. More concretely, the international community now regards the OPCW as a success story.

Reaching this stage has required hard work and commitment both from our States Parties and from the staff of the Technical Secretariat. In assessing the challenge they faced in setting up and placing on firm footing a new international organisation in the field of security, it needs to be borne in mind that never before had there been an obligation to completely and verifiably destroy an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. Never before was there a regime that subjected a considerable segment of economic activity to international verification. I am referring here to the industry verification regime of the CWC. What we had set out to accomplish was new and unprecedented. The provisions of the Convention and the procedures it established were also new and untested – technically and politically.

Attaining a comprehensive and effective ban on chemical weapons required not only the drafting of a complex legal document, the CWC, but also the creation of an international organisation that would translate the provisions of an international treaty into effective operational procedures.

Today the number of States Parties is 188 countries, and the OPCW can take great satisfaction from the progress made in its mission to establish a world free from the scourge of chemical weapons. By establishing a fully operational regime promoting disarmament and non-proliferation of the most often-used weapons of mass destruction, the Convention is now regarded as an essential pillar in the international security architecture.

In 2008, the States Parties expressed their verdict on the OPCW's performance at the Chemical Weapons Convention's Second Review Conference by characterising our progress as having set 'new standards for global disarmament and non-proliferation through verification in a non-discriminatory and multilateral manner.'

Indeed, the non-discriminatory provisions of the CWC have helped to promote its wide acceptance in a short period of time, so that 98 percent of the global population and the global chemical industry are now covered by its prohibitions. The Convention stands out favourably when compared to other treaties covering weapons of mass destruction. The existence of different sets of obligations as in the case of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) has not helped in reaching universality. Incidentally, we must duly appreciate the outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, which ended last week in New York with the adoption of a consensus document that seeks to pave the way in a number of crucial issues for international peace and security. As regards biological weapons, the absence of multilateral verification has created concerns about the

effectiveness of and compliance with the provisions of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC).

The OPCW, on the other hand, has proved to be a successful endeavour in true multilateralism. All its Member States enjoy equal status in every respect. Apart from delivering a concrete programme based on the Convention, it is a forum for consultations and cooperation, and for dialogue and consensus. It enables States to reach agreements, quite often on sensitive and complex issues, in order to progress effectively towards the Convention's full implementation.

Such constructive engagement amongst the States Parties to the CWC has ensured steady progress towards eliminating chemical weapons and ensuring their non-proliferation.

## Disarmament

Thus, the organisation moves ever closer to the vision of a world free from an entire category of weapons of mass destruction under conditions of international verification. This is surely the OPCW's main achievement so far. Close to 60% of the total volume of chemical warfare agents declared by six States Parties has been verifiably and irreversibly destroyed

Three possessor states—Albania, A State Party, and India—have completed the destruction of their chemical weapons under strict verification. The devotion shown by these countries in fulfilling their obligations is not only commendable, it also proves decisively that chemical disarmament under the terms of the CWC is indeed an attainable goal.

Similarly committed efforts towards the elimination of the remaining stockpiles continue to be made by the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, the Russian Federation, and the United States of America. Libya requested and was granted an extension of the deadline for the destruction of its Category 1 chemical weapons stockpile until May 2011. To date, the Russian Federation has destroyed more than 47% and the United States of America more than 72% of their respective declared stockpiles. This is remarkable achievement by any standard of comparison

At the same time, as we know, the final destruction deadline established in the Convention is 29 April 2012. This means that a period of less than two years is left to destroy close to 40% of the declared chemical weapons stockpiles, an onerous responsibility that falls mainly on the Russian Federation, which possesses the largest stockpile yet to be eliminated, and on the United States, which very transparently has already stated that it will not meet the time limit. Consequently, both countries should spare no effort in order to accelerate to the maximum possible extent their chemical weapons destruction activities, assigning to that end the necessary financial resources and technical installations.

Given the excellent track record and firm commitment towards the implementation of the CWC consistently shown by the Russian Federation and the United States of America, the achievement of the key goal of total and irreversible destruction of their declared stockpiles is not in doubt. Indeed, they have consistently shown their resolve to abide by their commitments under the Convention, and I for one have no doubt that they will remain on track. Moreover, it is important to comprehend fully the massive financial and technical magnitude of their undertaking, given the large quantities of highly toxic chemicals that they still need to eliminate

and the priority that the Convention itself recognises to the safety requirements involved in handling such chemicals.

The issue of meeting the obligation to complete destruction by the deadline established in the Convention is currently being considered by the OPCW Executive Council. Given the culture of consensus building in the OPCW, I have no doubt that, solemn and important as the matter of the treaty date undeniably is, the Council will come up with a recommendation that deals with it in the least disruptive and most balanced and forward-looking possible manner.

Let me also mention that Iraq's accession to the CWC last year is an important milestone, both for the Organisation and for the country itself, as it represents a clean break from a tragic past. The Iraqi authorities have declared to the OPCW the presence of chemical weapons that had been rendered unusable in the context of the activities authorised by the Security Council. Given the condition of those weapons, their safe and secure destruction under the terms of the Convention poses an altogether new challenge.

The Secretariat continues to work closely with the Iraqi authorities. Once aspects of the unique circumstances that it faces have been clarified further, the Secretariat will be able to consider the verification measures with respect to the declared chemical weapons and their destruction, as well as, of course, to carry out its initial inspection, for which all necessary preparations remain in place.

The OPCW's chemical demilitarisation programme also includes the elimination, permanently and verifiably, of the capability to produce chemical weapons.

Of the 70 chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) declared by 13 States Parties, 43 have already been destroyed and 21 have been converted for purposes not prohibited under the Convention. Eleven States Parties have completed the destruction or conversion of all their declared CWPFs. All converted production facilities remain under systematic verification by the OPCW to ensure that they are fully consistent with the approved conversion requests.

One other important matter under the Convention is that of abandoned chemical weapons. In that regard, Japan and China have continued their cooperation in dealing with the historic legacy of chemical weapons abandoned by Japan on the territory of China prior to the end of WWII. The Secretariat continues to work with these two States Parties with a view to supporting efforts towards the destruction of the abandoned chemical weapons. While no abandoned chemical weapons in China have so far been destroyed, work is progressing towards that end and many chemical weapons have already been recovered. I would like to thank both China and Japan for their cooperative and pragmatic approach, which helps to boost the spirit of consensus.

## Non-proliferation

The OPCW is rapidly approaching a new chapter in its evolution: the post-disarmament era.

Indeed, in any scenario, by 2012 the great majority of declared chemical weapons will have been destroyed. As a result, the chemical weapons-related verification effort, which today amounts to 85% of the inspection



activity, will be drastically reduced. In parallel, from 2012 non-proliferation rather than disarmament will, progressively and naturally, take up the larger percentage of the OPCW inspection effort.

Let me recall that on the non-proliferation front, much has already been achieved.

Since the CWC entered into force in April 1997, OPCW inspection teams have conducted verification at close to 2,000 industrial units, spending nearly thirty-two thousand four hundred inspection days on this effort. The willingness of the States Parties to allow these inspections is proof of the acceptance of verification for non-proliferation as an essential norm.

Inspections at commercial enterprises are unique to the CWC and a credit to the global chemical industry, which has remained a strong and invaluable partner since the time of the negotiations in Geneva. This support represents an unprecedented example in a disarmament treaty context of collaboration between the public sector and private enterprise in the promotion of security, while not prejudicing legitimate business interests.

Reinforcing the non-proliferation aspects of the Convention is crucial to its long-term success, particularly since the challenges in this area are very significant. This is a joint responsibility of States Parties and the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW. In my opinion, there is a need not only to continue to inspect the Schedule 1, 2, and 3 facilities, in accordance with the Convention, but also to extend and deepen the verification of relevant plants in the other chemical production facilities (OCPF) category, a good number of which could quickly be reconverted for the production of prohibited chemicals and used by terrorists.

I have, therefore, proposed to the policy making organs of the OPCW some concrete actions to that end, both through the annual draft budgets and through specific initiatives concerning the OCPF declarations made yearly by States Parties. I have also suggested, on a personal basis, that the OCPF verification effort could be supplemented by additional verification of OCPF plant sites carried out by well-functioning National Authorities, within their own territories and in the context of an agreement with the Technical Secretariat that would be subject to approval by the Executive Council.

During these past eight years I have additionally tried to ensure that at all time the TS retained its ability to carry challenge inspections should it be required to do so as per the Convention. As many of you know, this a rather delicate matter for some member states. However, the responsibilities of the TS and of the DG on the subject are very clear and there is no room for doubt. I consider crucial for deterrent and verification purposes that this unique, if exceptional, inspection modality remains alive and credible.

The need to remain focussed on industry verification arises also from the rapid evolutions both in the global chemical industry, which continuously reshapes itself, and in science and technology. Novel products and processes and greater efficiencies promise more prosperity but at times have also a potential for great harm if not properly supervised. The possible appearance of new deadly chemicals, questions raised by incapacitants and so called non-lethal weapons, the increasing overlaps between chemistry and biology, the integration of chemical engineering into the life sciences, the fusion between these and information technology and the potential impact on the Convention of nano-technology and micro reactors are all areas that demand appropriate attention. In this context, I emphasize the

importance of the continued training of OPCW inspectors and of maintaining an adequate roster of accredited laboratories. Equally, I encourage the OPCW to continue supporting the work of the Scientific Advisory Board, a valuable forum of scientists that advises on how developments in relevant fields might affect the effectiveness of the Convention's regime. The significance of the Board's contribution will, I am sure, be increasing in the future and appropriate measures to better support its work seem in order.

### National implementation

Verification of industry is a crucial, but not the only mechanism for ensuring confidence in compliance. The Convention, like any international treaty, is only as good as its effective implementation. Indispensable for the present and future effectiveness of the CWC is the requirement that all States Parties establish and reinforce the administrative and legislative measures necessary to redress any breach of the Convention within their jurisdiction. The relevance of such measures for counter-terrorism purposes is self-evident.

A year before the Security Council adopted its landmark resolution 1540 (2004) requiring UN Member States to adopt all necessary measures to prevent non-state actors from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, the First Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention, held in 2003, adopted an Action Plan to boost effective national implementation of the Convention globally. Since then there has been a steady increase in the number of States Parties that have introduced the appropriate legislation, including penal legislation.

A total of 185, or 98%, of the States Parties have now established or designated a National Authority as required by the Convention. 46% of the States Parties have enacted legislation covering all key areas of the Action Plan and 70% of them have laws in place that cover various aspects of the Convention.

One must recognise that more work needs to be done by a significant number of countries in this area. What is noteworthy, however, is the substantial institutional support that the OPCW provides to its States Parties through a variety of programmes and activities that are generously supported through voluntary contributions, especially by the European Union. It is on account of such programmes that the implementation of the CWC globally fares better than that of any comparable international legal instrument.

#### Assistance and Protection and International Cooperation

The Chemical Weapons Convention also establishes a clear right for its States Parties to seek assistance and protection in the event of an attack or threat of attack with chemical weapons. In view of contemporary security threats primarily emanating from concerns about terrorism, a number of our States Parties are seeking OPCW support to increase their national capacities for dealing with the issue.

For that purpose, the OPCW has been successful in offering capacity-building and training opportunities to relevant authorities of States Parties, such as civil defence organisations and first responders. Delivery of a quick response necessitates adequate preparations by the OPCW to coordinate actions with those States Parties that have pledged assistance, as well as the relevant international organisations. Compiling a database with offers of

assistance and holding field exercises are some of the useful measures in that respect.

On a broader sense, the international community has the legitimate expectation that the OPCW will contribute to the global anti-terrorist efforts concerning the field of chemical terrorism. Today, this subject includes the question of the security of chemical plants. Although the OPCW is not an anti-terrorist body and therefore cannot take the lead in this front, it can and must do its share in specific areas related to its mandate. Which means first and foremost the full and effective implementation of the CW and the active involvement of the OPCW and, in particular, the TS in broader UN relevant activities

International cooperation in the promotion of the peaceful uses of chemistry is also an important goal of the CWC. The OPCW is not a development agency, but it can help to build national and - as it does for Africa through a specific programme - regional capacities that are consistent with the objective of eliminating all chemical weapons and, at the same time, have a beneficial economic impact for the recipient countries. These are areas of special importance to Member States whose economies are developing or in transition and greatly benefits from partnerships and other forms of cooperation with a number of relevant specialised agencies, such as the International Foundation for Science. It seems to me particularly important that the high standards of the very successful flagship Associate Program, of which the OPCW is justly proud, be maintained whenever the OPCW ICA agenda is expanded.

Universality

Today, as I have already mentioned, the OPCW can proudly count 188 Member States. No other disarmament treaty has grown in membership so rapidly within such a relatively short time frame.

Our goal, however, is to ensure that all the members of the United Nations are also States Parties to the CWC. This means that there can be no exceptions to the moral and legal obligations to forswear chemical weapons, which the vast majority of the international community has accepted. The goal of the Convention is a world free from chemical weapons. This objective cannot be assured if there is even a single country that remains outside the Convention and thus technically retains the chemical weapons option. There are seven countries that have yet to join the CWC.

Three of them are located in the sensitive region of the Middle East. They are Egypt, Syria, and Israel - the latter having signed but not yet ratified the Convention. In the South East Asian region, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Myanmar are outside the CWC regime. Myanmar has signed but not ratified the Convention. The other two remaining countries are Angola and Somalia.

I have continually urged the remaining countries to join the Convention as a matter of urgency and without preconditions. Such a step will not only signal their commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation, but will also bring tangible benefits to their own national security.

#### OPCW management

Undoubtedly, the equation of success for the OPCW also necessitates adequate management of the Technical Secretariat, which is the OPCW

organ responsible for the efficient implementation and the continued credibility of the verification regime enshrined in the Convention. It is a continued challenge that in my view has to be addressed with absolute transparency, impartiality, and unqualified commitment to the CWC and the OPCW regulatory framework, including to the paramount requirement of excellence for its staff. It also requires a strong commitment to fiscal discipline and a deep sense of accountability. More immediately, a major management will be face the need to propose and implement the adjustments that will necessarily result from the significant decrease in chemical weapons-related verification that can be expected after 2012, a task in which the tenure policy can be of significant help.

#### Concluding remarks

Ladies and gentlemen,  
Distinguished guests,

The immense progress we have made and continue to make in consolidating the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda of the OPCW is the result of collective efforts. It is the result of the commitment and support of our States Parties, which have not lost sight of the fact that the chemical weapons ban was hard earned after efforts spanning a century. For that reason, the ultimate challenge for the OPCW is to retain the strong political support and the consensus culture enjoyed so far. This will require the continued goodwill and active commitment of all.

In that context, as the OPCW approaches the completion of the current main task of destroying Chemical weapons, it will be quite important not only to redesign a TS suited to much-reduced post 2012 demands in terms

of verification, but also to further strengthen public support for the OPCW and its future role(s) in the post-disarmament era.

To conclude, let me say that for me it has been a great privilege to have served as Director-General of the OPCW for the past eight years. I hope that I have fulfilled the mandate entrusted to me. I will leave the organisation with a sense of satisfaction and, indeed, deep gratitude to all those who have extended their wholehearted support to our work, including the Clingendael Institute.

I am sure such excellent relations will continue to mark the OPCW's relationship with the Institute under the Director-General designate, my good friend Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü, who has been elected unanimously on account of his outstanding credentials, to lead the Organisation into the future. He will take office on 25 July 2010 and I commend him to you all.

I thank you for your attention.