



ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION  
OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS

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High-level Meeting on Revitalizing the Work of the  
Conference on Disarmament and Taking Forward  
Multilateral Disarmament Negotiations

ADDRESS BY

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THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS

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H.E. the Secretary-General of the United Nations,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish at the outset to congratulate H.E. Mr Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations for convening this important meeting.

When in 1992, the Conference on Disarmament concluded the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), it accomplished the first treaty that bans an entire category of weapons of mass destruction in a non-discriminatory manner and under strict international verification.

As Head of the Organisation that oversees the implementation of the CWC, I consider it therefore an especial privilege to address this meeting. It is my hope that the positive experience of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) will contribute to reinforcing confidence in the effectiveness of multilateral action in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. The CWC regime is indeed a notable example of effective multilateralism.

Let me highlight the key achievements. Over 60 percent of a large stockpile of chemical weapons has already been destroyed under strict verification, and three possessor States have already fulfilled their destruction obligations and deserve recognition for their achievement. The efforts displayed by the remaining possessor States are commendable. Significant human and financial resources have been committed to eliminate a massive quantity of chemical weapons.

But the Convention is more than chemical weapons disarmament considerably important as that is. The systematic verification of the global chemical industry is effectively serving the non-proliferation goals of the Convention. Every year, we inspect over two hundred industrial facilities.

This is an important and useful control mechanism which should be welcomed by the States Parties as supplementary to their domestic enforcement measures. I also wish to add that the work of the OPCW benefits significantly from the support provided by the global chemical industry. This partnership is a unique example of collaboration in an arms control context where the industry has stepped forward to support security objectives.

In view of heightened concerns about asymmetrical threats including terrorism, the OPCW's assistance and protection programmes have gained particular importance.

In the area of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of chemistry, the activities that the Organisation conducts promote a sense of ownership amongst our States Parties especially those with developing economies.

The widespread support for the Convention is evident in the growth of our Membership that today stands at 188 States Parties encompassing 98 percent of the global population. The CWC has attracted more adherents in less time than any other disarmament treaty.

The full benefits of the Convention will, however, remain elusive until it achieves universal acceptance. It is crucial for the remaining 7 States not Party - and I seize this opportunity to appeal to them - to join the Convention. Unless this is accomplished, there cannot be a guarantee that chemical weapons have been eliminated completely from the world. Three of these states are located in the Middle East.

We are, of course, prepared to make our contribution to the Conference on the Middle East WMD free zone as envisaged in the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

The culture of cooperation at the OPCW offers an example of how multilateral cooperation and consensus building can lead to productive outcomes. This tradition also raises hopes that we will be able to deal effectively with the tasks that lie ahead of us.

On the disarmament side, a constructive and forward looking approach is desirable to deal with the challenge of possessor states not being able to meet the final deadline of 29 April 2010 for the destruction of all their chemical weapons. The possessor States on their part need to redouble their efforts to fulfil their obligations at their earliest.

The non-proliferation objectives of the Convention will also need to be strengthened through more focussed industry verification and adaptation of verification to the advances in science and technology.

Moreover, ensuring that all our States Parties continue to make steady progress towards full implementation of the Convention in their domestic jurisdictions is a vital objective, especially, as it constitutes the most practical means of addressing the contemporary threats relating to chemical terrorism.

Effective domestic implementation also means fulfilling the requirements of UN Security Council resolution 1540. The OPCW with its institutional capacity and experience is uniquely placed to advance the objectives of that resolution. In this context, the Organisation will continue to support the programmes organised by the UN Secretariat to promote effective implementation of resolution 1540.

The OPCW will furthermore continue to assist individual States Parties to enhance their capacities to implement the CWC in full. Since 1997, over 7,800 individuals have benefited through participation in our training courses, workshops and other programmes. This includes regular programmes for personnel belonging to National Authorities in States Parties.

A programme being increasingly demanded concerns training of customs officials. Outreach to customs has taken place in all regions and has been supported by the UN Environment Programme. We also have an active relationship with the WCO in areas

of mutual interest and look forward to strengthening our partnerships with other relevant international organisations.

Excellencies,

Progress in disarmament and non-proliferation requires the concerted action of the international community and the institutions that it has established to serve these goals. The work of the OPCW represents a concrete example of how the UN Charter's vision for peace and security can be translated into reality.

Our success has been due to the constructive attitude of cooperation consistently shown by our States Parties as well as other stakeholders. We must seek to emulate this spirit in other areas so that the international community can achieve yet greater progress towards peace and security.

I thank you for your attention.