



ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS

**Remarks of the Director-General on the occasion of the
2017 OPCW – The Hague Award ceremony**

27 November 2017

The Hague

REMARKS AS DELIVERED

Madam Mayor, Excellencies,
Distinguished guests, Ladies and gentlemen,

I am very pleased to welcome you to this very special ceremony. We are here to recognize two remarkable institutions who will jointly receive the 2017 OPCW – The Hague Award. Their important work in the areas of research, education, and the provision of advice to policy makers serves to remind us that the goal of a world free of chemical weapons is not the sole responsibility of the OPCW and its Member States. Rather, ridding the world of chemical weapons and preventing their re-emergence relies on a collective global effort involving stakeholders, institutions and individual experts. I am very pleased that the OPCW – The Hague Award provides us with a prestigious vehicle for honouring outstanding efforts to advance the noble goals of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The Award was set up, as you will recall, to maintain the legacy of the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the OPCW in 2013, a legacy we all continue to be immensely proud of.

As the host of the OPCW, the city of The Hague has shared in this pride and it makes a generous contribution to the Award, which bears its name alongside that of the OPCW. It gives me great pleasure to announce the two winners of the OPCW – The Hague Award for 2017. They are The African Center for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), represented here today by its Director, Mr Larry Gbevlo-Lartey and the International Master Courses in Protection Against CBRNe Events at the University of Rome Tor Vergata, represented by its Director, Professor Leonardo Palombi. Both of these institutions are at the forefront of engaging with issues that have grown in salience over recent years and will occupy the OPCW for many years to come. Please join me in congratulating them.

The African Center for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT) is located in Algiers, where it operates as a subsidiary body of the African Union Commission. The Center contributes to and strengthens the capacity of the African Union and its members to prevent and combat terrorism in Africa. It has done so for over a decade now by conducting research and developing

policies and procedures for the African Union and its member states. Delegates who follow closely the work of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism will recall the informative presentation given by the Center's Director, Mr Larry Gbevlo-Lartey, at the working group meeting in early September on counter-terrorism from an African Union perspective.

The two International Master Courses in Protection Against CBRNe Events at the University of Rome Tor Vergata, are at the forefront of the education of the next generation of first responders and advisors to policy makers. In this way the Master courses have contributed since 2009 to the promotion among a new generation of CBRNe experts of chemistry for peace and security. In May this year, the University of Rome tor Vargata in conjunction with the Health Safety Environmental Research Association Rome (HESAR) organised an impressive event in Rome to mark the 20th anniversary of OPCW.

Distinguished Delegates and Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I think it is especially fitting that this year we honour two institutions that carry out important work at the intersection of three trends and issues that have increasing importance for the Organisation. The first of these is the increasingly fluid international security landscape. While the OPCW and its Member States have made huge steps towards a world free of chemical weapons with over 96% of declared stockpiles having been destroyed, unfortunately such weapons are still being used. The growing significance of the non-state actor threat has been recognised by the OPCW policy making organs, most recently by the Executive Council in its decision on non-state actors this past October. Both our awardees through their activities contribute significantly to international counterterrorism efforts, including in the area of chemical weapons.

This year's awardees embed chemical weapons issues as a matter of course into the wider CBRN discourse and anti-terrorism efforts. This clearly speaks to the OPCW's interest in engaging with other relevant international institutions and treaty regimes. Another trend concerns the growing recognition of the importance of education and outreach in relation to the goals of the Convention and its implementation. That is why I declared 2014 as the year of education and outreach for the Organisation, and why the OPCW has created a new Advisory Board on Education and Outreach. This year's award winners' contributions in this respect are, again, very substantial: the Masters Courses at Tor Vergata have produced over 170 international experts and the African Center on Terrorism Research is regularly liaising with the over 50 African Union member states and the seven Regional Economic Communities on the continent.

Just as we seek to preserve the legacy of the Nobel Peace Prize through this award, we must ensure that the Organisation does not stand still. It must not be allowed to just look back, but also forward and to capture relevant trends. The Organisation will need to adapt itself to retain its relevance in years to come. In summary, the 2017 OPCW – The Hague Award winners conduct their activities where three highly relevant trends for the OPCW intersect: the changing security landscape, reaching out to relevant stakeholders in related fields, and growing importance of education and outreach. In doing so, both of them contribute in a very tangible and substantial way to achieving the goals of the Convention.

Distinguished Delegates, dear Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Committee received nominations of well deserving candidates. This goes to show the strength and energy of our partners in our vital mission to advance the object and purpose of the Chemical Weapons Convention. I invite States Parties and other relevant bodies to nominate suitable candidates for this Award in the coming years. I would like to thank the members of the Award Committee, Ms Pauline Krikke, Mayor of The Hague, His Excellency Ambassador Sheikh Mohammed Belal, chair of the OPCW Executive Council who is represented by Ambassador Maria Theresa Infante of Chile, Professor Natalia Tarasova, president of the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC), and Dr. Hariolf Kottmann, president of the International Council of Chemical Associations (ICCA) who is represented today by Mr Francis Leveque.

In closing, I invite you all, once again, to congratulate the African Center for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT) and the International Master Courses in Protection Against CBRNe Events at the University of Rome Tor Vergata.
