



**ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION  
OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS**

*Please check against delivery*

*Statement by H. E. Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü,*

*Director-General*

*OPCW*

*At the Tenth Regional Meeting of National Authorities in Asia*

*Colombo, Sri Lanka*

*26 June 2012*

**Honourable Senior Minister H. M. Fowzi,**  
**Honourable Mr Rishad Bathiudeen, Honourable Minister of**  
**Industry and Commerce,**  
**His Excellency Buddhi Athauda, Ambassador of Sri Lanka to the**  
**Netherlands,**  
**His Excellency Louis Piat, Ambassador of the Netherlands to Sri**  
**Lanka,**  
**Acting Secretary Mr Jayasinghe,**  
**Dr Rohan Perera, Director, National Authority**  
**Excellencies,**  
**Distinguished Guests,**  
**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a special privilege and pleasure for me to address the Tenth Regional Meeting of National Authorities of States Parties in Asia. The strategic location of Sri Lanka which made her the gateway to the East and the West attracted traders from all over the world as far back as 2,000 years ago; and today I am happy to be in this beautiful country especially in the city of Colombo which is a famous commercial hub in South Asia.

We are deeply honored by the presence of Honourable Senior Minister Fowzi and Mr. Rishad Bathiudeen, Honourable Minister of Industry and Commerce. Their presence today and the visit of Honorable Minister Bathiudeen to the OPCW Headquarters some 6 months ago demonstrate the commitment the Government of Sri Lanka attaches to the noble goals of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in promoting disarmament and non-proliferation, international peace and security.

I wish to express my deep appreciation to the Government of Sri Lanka and its National Authority for supporting this important event, for the excellent arrangements they have made, and, for their warm hospitality. I wish to extend my special thanks to Ambassador Buddhi Athauda, Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the OPCW, who has provided unconditional support to us throughout the process.

As one of the first countries to ratify the Chemical Weapons Convention, it is encouraging to see that Sri Lanka continues to provide unwavering support towards achieving the objectives of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

This important commitment is also demonstrated through the services provided to the Organization by Sri Lanka's distinguished diplomat, Ambassador Grace Asirwatham, in her capacity as the Deputy Director-General of the Organization.

This year, we mark the the fifteen years of the entry-into-force of the Convention. This significant milestone offers an opportunity to reflect on the important progress made and the success achieved in the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. As we take pride in our hard work that has produced excellent results, we also need to address the various challenges that lie ahead. This includes a path towards a transition that the Organization has embarked upon in order to serve the purposes of the Convention and to remain effective and capable in the long term.

In this context, the meetings of States Parties acquire special significance. National Authorities form the backbone of the Convention. They play a

crucial role in coordinating the work of different stakeholders at the national level. It is therefore essential that they have a good understanding of the requirements of the Convention in order to implement its provisions more effectively.

Over the last fifteen years, National Authorities in the Asia-Pacific region have gained considerable experience in implementing different facets of the Convention. Such annual meetings in the regions and those in the Hague prior to the Conference of States Parties provide important opportunities for experience sharing and enhancing cooperation on practical implementation related issues. The presence of over 40 participants from 30 States Parties underlines the importance that States Parties attach to this meeting. The Asian region, has some of the most diverse chemical industry in terms of type and size. On the one hand, it has States Parties which possess some of the most significant chemical industry in the world, while on the other it has States Parties with chemical industry in very nascent stages. The differences notwithstanding, each one of them is an equally important stakeholder and contributor to the success of our mission.

Let me now briefly touch upon some of the issues that are relevant to the Convention and this meeting.

Chemical demilitarisation remains as one of the core objectives of the Convention and there have been significant achievements in this regard.

As of 1 June 2012, nearly 75 % of the declared Category 1 stockpiles of chemical weapons have been destroyed. Three States Parties, including two from Asia, have fulfilled their CW destruction obligations. Three of

the possessor States Parties have been unable to fully meet the final extended deadline of 29 April 2012 to complete the destruction of Chemical weapons stockpiles. However, the States Parties adopted a constructive and forward looking approach to address this issue in order to ensure that completion of the remaining stockpiles will be done within shortest time possible. The possessor States are making steady efforts towards destroying their stockpiles. The United States of America, the Russian Federation and Libya, in accordance with the decision of the Conference of States Parties at its Sixteenth Session have submitted their detailed plans for the destruction of the remaining chemical weapons. Iraq which joined the Convention only in 2009 has also shown strong commitment to destroy the remnants of chemical weapons as early as possible.

There has also been progress in the destruction of chemical weapons abandoned by Japan on the territory of China. I am hopeful that through continuing goodwill and cooperation, this goal will also be fulfilled to the satisfaction of all parties.

Our efforts in disarmament and elimination of the remaining CW stockpiles need to be complemented through the verification mechanism and the prevention of re-emergence of chemical weapons. Establishing a credible level of assurance in this regard remains a priority for all Article VI industry inspections and, in particular, for OCPF inspections, due to the large number of plant sites that have yet to be inspected. Due to the dynamic nature of the chemical-production industry, the verification of Article VI industry sites will become more important to the integrity of the Convention. In order to strengthen the internal capabilities of

individual States Parties, it is important to ensure that the National Authorities are capable of monitoring their domestic chemical industries.

The Technical Secretariat has been encouraging States Parties to accept sequential inspections within States Parties and between agreeing States Parties. This would result in considerable savings in the Budget.

The Secretariat has introduced the Electronic Declarations tool for National Authorities, EDNA, to support you in the task of compiling and filing declarations. A new version, which includes usability improvements and analytical capabilities, will be made available this year.

There has been a significant increase in the number of States Parties making declarations in electronic form. I would encourage National Authorities who have yet to do so to give serious consideration to switching to EDNA, which provides several benefits to both National Authorities and the Secretariat.

National implementation is a high priority for all of us here gathered in this room. The Secretariat has continued to accord importance to providing support to States Parties in their efforts to implement the Convention more effectively.

Currently 98% of the States Parties have established or designated National Authorities. Since the adoption of Article VII Action Plan on national implementation in 2003, substantial progress was witnessed in the initial phase, but it has diminished over the years. As of date, only 88 States Parties have legislation covering all key areas. The number of

States Parties without comprehensive legislation thus continues to remain high. It is an area that merits our attention.

The Secretariat has offered some ideas about a results-oriented incremental approach to legal implementation. The approach aims to facilitate adoption of the necessary legislation by States Parties that have yet to do so. The general response of the States Parties was positive and encouraging. We will now need to further refine these ideas.

A number of National Authorities are collaborating with other National Authorities for practical implementation related activities. In this context, the Secretariat is currently piloting a Mentoring Programme for National Authorities, where States Parties which have relatively new National Authorities can benefit from the guidance and support of larger and fully functional National Authorities. The Secretariat has also initiated an internship programme under which legal drafters can spend two weeks at the OPCW headquarters to develop or finalize their legislation.

Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The number of States Parties to the CWC today stands at 188 which reflects a near-universal acceptance of the Convention. The OPCW membership covers 98% of the world's population and 98% of the global chemical industry. The OPCW will continue to seek constructive engagement with the remaining eight States not Party to the CWC. The object and purpose of the Convention can not be fully realized unless universal membership is achieved. Concerted efforts are needed to

encourage the remaining countries to join the Convention. Of the eight countries which are yet to join the CWC, two are from Asia namely North Korea and Myanmar. Myanmar is an original signatory to the Convention which has been encouraged to expedite their ratification process. It is my hope that the countries in the region will use their good offices in exploring further possibilities in encouraging the remaining States not Party to join the Convention at the earliest.

The challenges we face today do not stem exclusively from the elements that are inherent in our field of work. The world economy is experiencing a serious challenge. The Organisation too needs to be responsive to the resource constraints and come out with new and more efficient ways of conducting its activities. I have initiated several steps in the Technical Secretariat to further rationalise our budgetary requirements without compromising the quality and the operational efficiency. This means that we would have to do more with less funding and find innovative solutions. One such initiative underway is E-learning in keeping with the evolution in distant education and training. A number of e-learning modules are ready and will be uploaded shortly on the OPCW website. This initiative will be discussed in more detail later in this meeting.

While the cooperation between the OPCW and our States Parties is crucial, one cannot overemphasize the importance of regional and sub-regional cooperation. In Asia, such cooperation is demonstrated through several events hosted throughout the year by various States Parties, namely Japan, Malaysia, Republic of Korea, Qatar, Singapore, India, Pakistan, Jordan, China and Sri Lanka. Some States Parties, including the Republic of Korea and Qatar have also contributed through generous voluntary contributions to various activities. I also wish to extend my



appreciation to the European Union for its continued support towards the implementation support activities, many of which have been undertaken in the Asia-Pacific region. The presence of Australia at this Meeting is another symbol of cross-regional interaction and cooperation. I am confident that this cooperation will continue to develop in the future.

I am happy to note that our work is increasingly getting recognized by the international community. As you may be aware, a high level meeting of the Governments of States Parties, on the margins of the 67<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly has been scheduled to take place in October this year. The UN Secretary General has welcomed this initiative and will be addressing the meeting. I am confident that I can count on your countries' support and participation in making the event a success.

Another important event on our agenda is scheduled to take place next year. The Third Review Conference of the States Parties to review the operation of the Convention will be held from 8 to 19 April 2013. ~~An~~The Open Ended Working (OEWG) established to prepare for the Third Review Conference is regularly meeting under the chairmanship of Ambassador of Algeria to steer their preparatory work in an effective manner, evaluating the developments of the last five years and providing guidance for the future.

While we review the past activities, it is important to keep abreast of emerging trends in areas of chemical safety and security, chemical terrorism, advances in science and technology as well as the increasing importance of regional cooperation in the context of the implementation of Convention. We can also draw upon the recommendations of the Advisory Panel on Future Priorities of the OPCW. The National

Authorities which are responsible for implementation of the Convention in their countries, should also play a significant role in the process of deciding the future priorities of the Organisation by providing substantive inputs and advice on policy matters to their Permanent Representatives in The Hague.

Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The meeting has a substantive agenda before it. While encouraging your active participation in the deliberations I wish you all the very best to have a productive and successful meeting. I also hope that the outcome of the meeting would help us in drawing useful insights and ~~further~~ guidance to further intensify our future work on national implementation of the Convention in the Asian region.

I thank you for your attention.

-----