



ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Celebration of Nourouz Address by Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü, OPCW Director-General OPCW Headquarters, The Hague, Netherlands

21 March 2018

REMARKS AS DELIVERED

H.E. Mr Alireza Jahangiri, Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran,
H.E. Mr Magzhan Ilyassov, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kazakhstan,
H.E. Mr Venu Rajamony, Permanent Representative of the Republic of India
H.E. Mr Mohammad Homayoon Azizi, Permanent Representative of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan,

Excellencies,
Dear colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to open this event and welcome you all to the Headquarters of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

Firstly, I would like to express my appreciation to the Permanent Missions of Afghanistan, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and Kazakhstan for organising today's festivities. We are delighted to be hosting this event of such rich cultural history and significance to so many.

Nourouz is a special time celebrated around the world. It is more than just a day to usher in the spring. Nourouz is a moment for everyone to gather and rejoice in the spirit of peace, reconciliation and renewal.

These are values that are part of the OPCW's very fibre and make-up.

Our success as an organisation is built upon the idea that peace is a collective endeavour that cannot be realised alone. This requires a spirit of close cooperation between member countries and a strong commitment to our common goals. At present, 192 countries share in our mission and are dedicated to 'working together for a world free of chemical weapons.'

Despite this overwhelming support for this ideal, the international community is still haunted, even today, by the use of toxic chemicals as weapons. It is important, therefore, that we take advantage of these occasions devoted to celebrating peace and unity to commit ourselves afresh to the ideals and values that unite us.

It is my hope that while you enjoy today's festivities – the food, music, art work and dancing – that you also pause to consider the deeper meaning of Nourouz and look to the future with a renewed determination to the task of constructing a safer, more secure world for all.

Thank you.
