



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Sixteenth Session

28 November – 2 December 2011

C-16/NAT.24

29 November 2011

ARABIC and ENGLISH only

LIBYA

**STATEMENT BY MR AHMED HASSAN WALID
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AT THE SIXTEENTH SESSION
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,

Your Excellency, the Director-General,

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, members of delegations,

Allow me at the outset to extend to you, in my name and on behalf of the Libyan delegation, our congratulations on your election as Chairperson of the Sixteenth Session of the Conference of States Parties, which stands as a testimony to your expertise and competence. I also wish to congratulate the members of the General Committee on their election in this session. I should not fail, on this occasion, to express my deep appreciation to the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Mr Ahmet Üzümcü, and all staff members of the Technical Secretariat, for their efforts to achieve the objectives of the Convention, to which we all aspire. I am pleased to extend my thanks to H.E, Ambassador Julio Roberto Silva, for his successful leadership during the previous session of the conference.

The convening of the present session coincides with the formation of the new Transitional Government in Libya, which is the first government to take over after the overthrow of the former authoritarian regime. Consequently, the current session takes on a special importance for the Libyan delegation, which is attending it under the banner of the fledgling government of the free Libya. My delegation, while hoping to provide all support and cooperation to contribute to making this session a success, would like to shed light on the developments relevant to the Convention, which accompanied the change in Libya.

It would be useful in this context to briefly remind the distinguished members of delegations that since joining the Convention in 2004, Libya has destroyed 100% of its Category 3 chemical weapons stockpile, 39% of its Category 2 chemical weapons stockpile and 54% of its Category 1 chemical weapons stockpile. It was scheduled, by virtue of a resolution by the Fourteenth Session of the Conference and amendments thereto, that Libya should have completed destruction of its entire declared Category 1 stockpile by 15 May 2011 and its entire Category 2 stockpile by 31 December 2011. However, the events that took place in Libya brought about exceptional circumstances, which consequently impeded the completion of the Libyan programme to destroy the remaining declared Category 1 chemical weapons stockpile. Destruction activities were suspended in the Ruwagha site.



During the crisis that plagued Libya in the course of the liberation movement, there was an understanding of the stance of States Parties and their concerns over the safety of Category 1 chemical weapons stockpile in Libya. Therefore, in spite of its critical working conditions, the Permanent Representation of Libya to the OPCW, through contacts with sources inside the country, has continued to gather information, follow-up issues related to Category 1 chemical weapons stockpile, and informed the Technical Secretariat and the Executive Council of the situation in this regard, in anticipation of any emergency, and with a view to alleviating the concerns of States Parties regarding the possible misuse of the said stockpile during these events.

In addition, committed to upholding the integrity of the Convention and to complying with destruction-programme timelines, the Libyan Representation has attached particular importance to the issue of the deadline for the completion by Libya of the destruction of its remaining Category 1 chemical weapons stockpile and cooperated with the Secretariat and the Executive Council to address this issue, which led to the adoption by the Council at its Thirtieth Meeting of a recommendation to the Conference at its Sixteenth Session to grant Libya an extension, to 29 April 2012, of the deadline for the destruction of all its Category 1 chemical weapons stockpile, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention (EC-M-30/DEC.1, dated 30 May 2011). On this occasion, we hope that the Conference will positively consider the contents of this document.

Soon after the liberation of Al-Jufra, the region in South Libya where the Ruwagha chemical weapons site is located, the latter was secured under the strict control of the forces of Libyan national liberation army. A Technical Secretariat inspection team visited this site early in November 2011, and ascertained the physical safety of the stored materials, as a preliminary step before the resumption of destruction operations at a later stage.

On the other hand, following the liberation of Libya and during the patrolling of military sites, some remains of chemical weapons have been discovered in the Sokna region, and officially declared to the OPCW. In the same respect, munitions suspected to be of chemical nature have been discovered in Sabha region, then transferred to the Ruwagha site, being the most appropriate site for the storage of such munitions. We call upon the Secretariat to dispatch its experts to identify and verify these materials, in order to officially declare them in due time.

Libya has started its journey towards building a State of law and institutions that would enable it to play a positive role within the international community. Libya remains committed to all international conventions and treaties it has signed, including the Chemical Weapons Convention. In this context, my country will apply and enforce national measures ensuring the implementation of all the provisions of the Convention, based on transparency and clarity, and will accord the highest priority to the destruction and verification of chemical weapons.

We look forward to opening new avenues for cooperation with the OPCW and its different structures with a view to making an effective contribution to achieving the objectives of the Convention, abiding by its principles and complying with all its provisions. Meanwhile, we hope to extend bridges for positive bilateral and multilateral cooperation, in such a way as to materialise the objectives of the Convention, based on the sound foundations of objectivity and respect for national sovereignty, achieve common interests, and ensure useful cooperation in the various relevant activities and fields. On this occasion, we should like to

extend our sincere thanks to all States that have been prompt to provide assistance to Libya in purposes related to the Convention, particularly Germany and the United States.

The Chemical Weapons Convention is an integrated and comprehensive framework for the complete exclusion of any possibility to keep, use or acquire chemical weapons in whatsoever manner. If this objective is effectively achieved, it will undoubtedly contribute to reaching an international détente and laying the foundations for a global peace that cannot otherwise be established if there are still weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons. Any observer of disarmament issues would recognise that the Chemical Weapons Convention stands at the fore of disarmament international instruments, in terms of its relative effectiveness in the implementation of the relevant programmes on the abandonment of weapons. In addition, in view of the appeal it enjoys among the States, the Convention is close to becoming universal, with only very limited number of States yet to join it. Most probably, some States who are not yet party to the Convention have chemical weapons, and intend maybe to keep them for some time, possibly believing that this category of weapons serves as a deterrent close to the non-conventional warfare machinery, and as a chemical option that may be used also as a deterrent to nuclear weapons, although chemical weapons would not amount to the same level of danger as nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, deterrence considerations along with lack of trust may explain why some States still maintain chemical options. Therefore, credibility and the adoption of common standards in dealing with disarmament issues, especially weapons of mass destruction in all their categories, would encourage all States to subscribe to the relevant instruments and comply with their ensuing obligations. Against this backdrop, States possessing most of chemical weapons and other weapons of mass destruction are invited, now more than ever, to set an example for the rest of countries in abiding by international laws, and thereby abandoning and eliminating their arsenals, and ridding the world of their woes. These States should promptly take serious and candid measures, to promote confidence building and opening of avenues conducive to a genuine peace resting on justice and equality. While some peoples of the world already endured the woes of chemical and nuclear weapons, this should never be repeated in any part of the world. The peoples of the world are yearning for the day when the world becomes free of weapons of mass destruction.

The Convention universality is of utmost importance. My delegation therefore stresses on this issue that rests on the need for all States to join the Convention without further delay. We are still deeply concerned that some States still possess enormous chemical capabilities, primarily the Israeli entity in occupied Palestine, which possesses sophisticated chemical weapons among other weapons of mass destruction, while it did not ratify the Convention, and still procrastinates and advances unfounded pretexts. Therefore, its non-adherence to the Convention does impede the legitimate efforts to make the region free of weapons of mass destruction, and obstructs endeavours to build confidence and bring about just peace in the region, and consequently impacts the requisites for international peace and security.

As long as there are States possessing sophisticated chemical capabilities outside the Convention, there is every likelihood that sophisticated chemical weapons exist and may one day be used in whatsoever manner, either by a State or by terrorist groups. Therefore, it has become necessary, more than ever before, to call upon the States concerned to promptly join and sign the Convention, and to ensure that all States indiscriminately and fully abide by all provisions of the Convention, to rise up to humankind expectations to live in a world free from threats of weapons of mass destruction.