



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Sixteenth Session
28 November – 2 December 2011

C-16/NAT.32
28 November 2011
ENGLISH and FRENCH only

SWITZERLAND

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR MARKUS BÖRLIN PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE OF SWITZERLAND TO THE OPCW AT THE
SIXTEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,

I would like to begin by congratulating you on your election as Chairperson of the Sixteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties. My delegation is looking forward to working with you, and we are convinced that your able chairmanship will lead this Conference to a successful conclusion.

We are at a crucial moment in the history of the Organisation, which faces a number of challenges.

Finding an appropriate solution on the issue of the final extended deadline is one of the urgent and compelling tasks of this session. Switzerland welcomes the ample progress that was made during the last week's meeting of the Executive Council. Having said this, we regret that the Council had to proceed to a vote in order to take a decision. We would like to reiterate our strong commitment to the consensus principle when it comes to the Organisation's mode of operation. Let me take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation for the tireless efforts the Chair of the Executive Council has made in reaching a compromise text, which is, in our view, compatible with, and within the limits of, the Convention provisions.

Switzerland takes note of the Director-General's revised draft for the 2012 programme and budget. Given the current global financial context, which is marked by increasing pressure on national budgets in most States Parties, and the expected decline in destruction-related inspection activities, we think that a well-balanced reduction of the budget level is appropriate and should allow this Organisation to continue to fulfil its main tasks without reservations. New or shifting expenditures need to be clearly prioritised and thoroughly argued. Although we consider it legitimate to discuss increasing activities in the field of Article VI inspections and international cooperation and assistance, we remain unconvinced as to the necessity of the proposed size of these increases.

With regard to the issue of tenure policy, we are pleased to note the recent consensus that emerged from consultations and would like to thank the facilitator for her strenuous efforts that led to this result. We consider this agreement on extending the Director-General's exceptional authority to be crucial. It is our view that an inflexible application of the tenure



policy will generate high costs, resulting in a loss of valuable technical expertise and thus, ultimately, in a weakening of the Organisation. We must not endanger the Director-General's ability to comprehensively fulfil the mandate we gave him ourselves and should explore all possible options in future.

Turning now to industry-related issues, we note the recent consensus on policy guidelines for determining the number of Article VI inspections, as well as on the site-selection methodology for OCPFs. It is our hope that these decisions will help to maintain the quality of the industry verification regime, one of the Convention's unique assets. In this regard, Switzerland would like to recall that a well-trained, adequately equipped and informed inspectorate is key to an effective verification process. We should ensure that the OPCW's inspectorate enjoys the integrity and independence required under the Convention. In this context, let me also reiterate Switzerland's continued willingness to provide inspector training courses.

Let me now touch on another aspect which is related to the verification process. Switzerland has repeatedly stressed the importance of "sampling and analysis" (S&A) as a deterrent instrument against the proliferation of chemical weapons. In our view, the OPCW Central Analytical Database (OCAD) should be steadily expanded based on technical and not on political considerations. Unscheduled derivatives of scheduled chemicals should be included in the OCAD to allow thorough on-site inspections. Switzerland urges the Executive Council to approve the data of those few pending non-scheduled chemicals. The Validation Group and the Scientific Advisory Board have both recommended the inclusion of these chemicals. To further develop the OCAD, Switzerland continues to provide data on scheduled chemicals to laboratories in all Member States.

With regard to the national implementation of the Convention, we note with concern that as of the Sixty-Sixth Session of the Executive Council, 100 States Parties had not put in place all the legislative measures for the full implementation of Article VII. In fact, the Convention cannot be considered effective if it is not translated into legislative and executive measures in every State Party. Switzerland therefore urges all States Parties to properly implement all national obligations under the Convention.

As to international cooperation and assistance, Switzerland continues to attach great importance to the implementation of Article X. For many years, we have organised focused training courses at the NBC Centre of the Swiss Armed Forces in Spiez. Against the background of two major regional capacity-building projects, Switzerland fully endorses proposals that aim at strengthening regional cooperation and at creating networks of regional and subregional training centres. The recent assistance and protection workshop in The Hague provided a good opportunity to further discuss and deepen this concept. Finally, I would like to stress my country's continued support to the Technical Secretariat in order to secure its ability and preparedness to coordinate a major assistance-and-protection operation.

Switzerland welcomes the report of the Advisory Panel on future priorities of the OPCW. It comes at a timely moment: in light of the expected completion of the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles, we have to prepare the Organisation for a transition to an agency whose main task will be to ensure that the menace of chemical warfare and the use of toxic chemicals for hostile purposes will never re-emerge. Together with the thoughtful comments of the Director-General, the report provides a valuable basis for our deliberations in view of

the 2013 Review Conference. The retreat organised by the Director-General was a good first step in this regard.

In this regard, let me also mention the next IUPAC international workshop to be held in Spiez, Switzerland, from 21 to 23 February 2012. The workshop is organised jointly by IUPAC, the OPCW and Switzerland. Its goal is to assess the impact of developments in science and technology on the operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, as a contribution to the Third Review Conference to be held in 2013.

As has been frequently pointed out, the world in which the Convention operates has changed, and continues to do so. If we want to ensure the ongoing relevance of the Convention as an international security regime, we will have to adapt it to this changing environment. As distinctions between law enforcement, counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency operations become increasingly blurred, incapacitating chemical agents (ICAs) may appear to offer tactical solutions in situations where perpetrators and bystanders are mixed. Switzerland reiterates its view that, within the framework of the OPCW, a comprehensive and broad debate on ICAs and their status under the Convention would be important. We remain hopeful that further space and time can be allocated to this issue in the near future. In this context, we are pleased to inform you that in early September, Switzerland and the Finnish Institute for Verification of the Chemical Weapons Convention (VERIFIN) organised a workshop aimed at furthering the technical understanding of ICAs and their potential for abuse. We are about to prepare the workshop report which we will share with delegations and other interested parties.

Mr Chairperson, I thank you for your attention.

- - - 0 - - -