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**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR ROBERT P. MIKULAK
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SIXTEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairman, Mr Director-General, distinguished delegates,

I am pleased to be here among so many colleagues at the Sixteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties. I warmly welcome our new Chairman, Ambassador Paul Arkwright. I have every confidence in his ability to guide us skilfully through our full agenda this week, and I pledge my own support and that of the entire U.S. delegation to making this a productive and successful session. I also extend my deep appreciation to our outgoing Chairman, Ambassador Julio Roberto Palomo Silva of Guatemala, and thank him for his dedication and exemplary service to this Organisation over the past year.

I would also like to express my appreciation to our Director-General, Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü. His vision and guidance remain critical to the ongoing success of this Organisation, and we welcome his leadership. The many successes that this Organisation has achieved, and continues to achieve, are directly related to the hard work of the Director-General and the staff of the Technical Secretariat. I thank them as well.

The first priority this week must be to bring the 2012 budget negotiation to a successful conclusion, drawing on our culture of cooperation and consensus building. The U.S. delegation supports in principle the proposal by the Director-General for an increase in both industry inspections and in funding for international cooperation. My delegation is committed to finding a holistic solution that will strengthen both industry verification and international cooperation and assistance. Both elements are important for achieving the goals of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

A fundamental goal of this Organisation that is certainly on everyone's mind this week is the total destruction of chemical weapons. For the United States, the safe and environmentally sound destruction of more than 27,000 metric tons of assorted chemical weapons has been an enormous challenge. The United States has made significant strides towards meeting this challenge, and I am proud to report on these achievements.

The United States has met the 1%, 20%, and 45% treaty milestones. To date we have destroyed more than 89% of our Category 1 chemical weapons. The United States has also destroyed all of our former chemical weapons production facilities.



I am pleased to announce that since we met last December, the United States has completed destruction activities at two more stockpile sites. On 22 September 2011, the United States completed destruction of all chemical weapons at the Anniston Chemical Agent Disposal Facility in Alabama. And on 25 October 2011, the United States completed destruction of its chemical weapons stockpile at Umatilla, Oregon. This brings the number of chemical weapons destruction facilities that have completed operations to six. Now the United States has only one chemical weapons destruction facility operating, at Tooele, Utah, with two additional sites under construction. The destruction at Tooele is 99.9% complete and will be finished before the final extended deadline of April 2012. To date, the United States has expended an estimated 23.7 billion dollars for the destruction of chemical weapons in the United States.

Over many years, the United States has addressed and resolved complex safety and environmental concerns raised by state and local authorities, as well as local citizens living near our chemical weapons storage and destruction facilities. Technical issues that arose in the course of destruction operations have also been surmounted. We have made, and will continue to make, every effort to ensure that our chemical weapons are destroyed consistent with the Chemical Weapons Convention: safely, without harm to workers, people living near the facility, or the environment; verifiably, under the eyes of OPCW inspectors; and as rapidly as practicable. In 2011, this commitment was reaffirmed by both the former United States Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton.

We are also committed to transparency of our chemical weapons destruction programme, so that States Parties can evaluate our efforts for themselves. To that end, we have provided 90-day reports for the past five and one-half years that track our progress in three-month intervals. We have also made informal destruction presentations at every informal meeting of the Executive Council on chemical weapons destruction to offer frank and honest information on our programme. We have invited Executive Council representatives to make site visits to our facilities and meet with senior officials—which allow an opportunity for these representatives to judge for themselves what we are doing, based on their own observations. In fact, the participants in an Executive Council visit to two U.S. facilities in March 2011 stressed that they came away with a better understanding of the local and technical challenges the United States has successfully overcome and the strong U.S. commitment to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Tomorrow, 29 November at 2:00 pm, the U.S. delegation will provide an informal presentation on the status of U.S. chemical weapons destruction efforts, which will be delivered by Mr Andrew Weber, the senior Defense Department official in charge of this programme. We offered a similar presentation last year, which garnered considerable interest. This year Mr Weber has returned to demonstrate our continuing commitment to transparency and 100% destruction. The United States will continue to provide the transparency measures necessary to ensure that the States Parties of this Organisation have confidence in our chemical weapons destruction efforts.

This week, the Conference must take a fundamental decision on the way forward for this Organisation regarding the likelihood that the United States and Russia will miss the 29 April 2012 final extended deadline for the complete destruction of their chemical weapons stockpiles. We welcome the action taken by the Executive Council last week to forward a recommendation to the Conference. The recommended draft decision garnered

overwhelming support in the Executive Council and is the result of two years of negotiation. It has many shortcomings, but it represents a precarious balance of interests and concerns.

Last week, the Executive Council demonstrated the political will to deal seriously and decisively with this important issue. This week it will be incumbent on the Conference to recognise the results of two years of intense negotiations and demonstrate equal political will in adopting the draft resolution recommended by the Executive Council. We hope that it can be approved by consensus, or if consensus is not present, by an overwhelming majority.

One of the most important developments of the last twelve months was the Director-General's initiative to begin a dialogue with States Parties on the future of the OPCW. We welcome this initiative. The report of the advisory group, and the Director-General's comments, provide a broad strategic vision and a number of very useful recommendations. I look forward to continuing discussions on the future of the OPCW with colleagues, a process that began in September with the very useful ambassadorial-level retreat at Noordwijk. This topic will naturally also be a critical element in our preparations for the Third Review Conference.

There is naturally a tendency to think of the future of the OPCW in terms of the advisory group report. But we also need to be aware that some of the decisions that we are addressing this week also will have a major influence on whether the OPCW continues to be a successful and effective international organisation—an organisation that is a model and an inspiration to others. I have already mentioned the importance of the Conference taking a decision on the 2012 deadline issue.

One less prominent, but still important practical issue affecting the future of the OPCW is the extension of the Director-General's authority to grant limited exceptions to the seven-year tenure restriction. It was a significant achievement for the Executive Council to recommend that the Conference renew this authority. The Conference must approve this decision so that those experts who are needed for verification may be retained.

Another decision that is important for the future is the proposed agreed framework on Article XI. I have already indicated U.S. support for increased funding for international cooperation and assistance in the 2012 budget. In the Executive Council we are close to a consensus recommendation to the Conference. I would urge delegations to focus on what can be agreed to in this text and not to insist on trying to resolve very sensitive export control-related matters. Adoption of an agreed framework will provide the Technical Secretariat guidance on areas that States Parties consider particularly important for future work. In particular, the focus on strengthening chemical safety and security programmes will help States Parties deal with new security threats and at the same time facilitate development of their chemical industries. In support of this work the United States, in addition to supporting additional Article XI-related funding in the regular budget, has made a voluntary contribution of more than USD 500,000 to allow the Technical Secretariat to improve and expand its chemical safety and security programmes.

Bringing the seven remaining non-Member States, particularly those that may possess chemical weapons, into the Convention, is also clearly essential to realise its objectives fully. Realistically, this will depend more on geopolitical developments than on continued demarches. Nonetheless, the trend of recent developments gives us some encouragement. We should patiently continue to lay the groundwork by efforts at engagement with each of

the non-States Parties and take every opportunity to stress that there is no justification for any country to keep the option to have chemical weapons.

Joining the Convention is only the beginning of the story, however, and not the end. The Director-General's annual report on Article VII implementation, which is before us this week, makes clear that 53% of States Parties still have much work to do to implement their Article VII obligations fully. In many cases, this unfortunate situation exists fifteen years after the State became legally bound by these obligations. In responding to the Director-General's report, we as States Parties must consider what more can be done to remedy the current very unsatisfactory situation. The Technical Secretariat, as well as the United States, stands ready to provide Article VII support and technical assistance to any State Party requesting it. It is also important to note that fulfilment of Article VII obligations also satisfies part of Convention States Parties obligations under 2004 UN Security Council Resolution 1540. When a State Party takes this important step, another gap is closed, and our collective security is enhanced.

As possessor States continue working hard to complete the destruction of their remaining stockpiles, the OPCW must also remain focused on preventing the acquisition of chemical weapons. The provisions of Article VI are key tools for ensuring the non-proliferation of chemical weapons. The Convention compels us to maintain visibility of not only those facilities producing scheduled chemicals, but also "other chemical production facilities" that could be misused for the illicit production of chemical weapons. This particular group of facilities is both diverse and vast—more than 4,000 so-called OCPF sites are declared to the Technical Secretariat annually. Because our verification resources are not limitless, it is incumbent upon us, the States Parties, to ensure that the most relevant of these facilities are credibly verified. To this end, States Parties should consider further improvements to site-selection procedures and discuss ways to increase the efficiency of the declaration and inspection regime without compromising its effectiveness.

In this regard, the United States welcomes two important achievements in 2011: the adoption at the Sixty-Fifth Session of the Executive Council of a site-selection methodology that leads to the selection of sites of most relevance for inspection; and the adoption at the Sixty-Sixth Session of the Council of an agreement that will help to determine the number and frequency of industry inspections. We must carry forward this positive momentum into 2012 to continue to improve the industry inspection regime.

Regarding speechmaking, U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt once said, "Be sincere; be brief; be seated." With that, I request that this statement be circulated as an official document to the Sixteenth Session of the Conference.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

USA – Supplement, 29 November 2011

Mr Chairman,

I had intended to end my statement at this point. Unfortunately, some remarks made yesterday by the Permanent Representative of Iran make it necessary for me to prolong my statement and respond directly. Perhaps I should thank him for giving such a prominent

place to the United States in what he said. My country is mentioned more than ten times in the text. But alas, there were no kind words, only a political rant against the United States that is apparently mostly intended for domestic consumption in Iran. But it's sad that Iran chose to use this session for political mud-slinging, rather than for a rational discussion of the issues that the Conference must resolve.

Iran has once again alleged that the United States will deliberately not comply with the 29 April 2012 destruction deadline, and in fact plans to retain a chemical weapons stockpile. Nothing could be further from the truth. This rhetoric is patently false given that the United States has transparently and repeatedly described our chemical weapons destruction challenges and difficulties since 2006. As I noted above, the U.S. destruction programme is well ahead of where we thought it would be five years ago—we are projected to have only approximately 10% of our stockpile remaining on 29 April 2012. No other delegation appears to doubt the United States' full commitment and dedication to completely destroy our stockpile completely.

A delay in destroying one's stockpile, even though we are destroying it as rapidly as practicable, is not a deliberate attempt to illicitly retain chemical weapons. Such an accusation is absurd, or—to use a synonym with its origins in the Dutch language—poppycock. Our chemical weapons stockpile, which remains under full OPCW verification, does not pose a security threat to anyone, while others' illicit acquisition and retention efforts pose a threat to us all. With this in mind, we trust that the other members of the Conference will continue to understand that the unrelenting and transparent chemical weapons destruction effort of the United States will continue.

Since the Iranian representative raised the more general issue of weapons of mass destruction, I also feel compelled to comment on this broader area as well. Our chemical weapons stockpile, which remains under full OPCW verification, does not pose a security threat to anyone, while illicit acquisition and retention efforts of weapons of mass destruction threaten us all. In this connection, I need only recall the resolution adopted in Vienna at the IAEA on 18 November 2011 which stressed “that Iran continues to defy the requirements and obligations contained in the relevant IAEA Board of Governors and UN Security Resolutions” related to implementation of nuclear safeguards. It's doubly ironic that that the rule of law and the nuclear issue seem to have been brought into the OPCW by the delegation of Iran.

The Permanent Representative of Iran has also made the spurious allegation that the United States provided the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein with “chemical weapons.” This is, of course, an absurd and baseless allegation, that reflects more on Iran than on the United States.

Mr Chairman,

I ask that this statement be distributed as an official document of this session of the Conference.