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**OPENING CEREMONY FOR THE INAUGURATION OF
OPCW TRAINING GROUP B**

Ypenburg, 16 January 1998

**OPENING ADDRESS
BY
DR. IR. J.J.C. VOORHOEVE
MINISTER OF DEFENCE OF THE NETHERLANDS**

AND

**WELCOMING ADDRESS
BY
JOSÉ MAURICIO BUSTANI
DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE OPCW**

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**OPENING ADDRESS
BY
DR. IR. J.J.C. VOORHOEVE
MINISTER OF DEFENCE OF THE NETHERLANDS**

1. It gives me great pleasure to welcome every one of you to the Opening Ceremony of the second training course for inspectors of the OPCW. The start of this programme coincides with the fifth anniversary of the Chemical Weapons Convention, which was opened for signature on 13 January 1993 in Paris.
2. It took us twenty years of negotiations to agree this long-awaited complete ban. Two thousand and four hundred years earlier the use of chemical weapons took place for the first time. It occurred when Athens and Sparta used burning sulphur and tar in their famous war. In Asia, black gunpowder mixed with arsenic was developed in the ninth century.
3. The scientific and industrial revolution in the nineteenth century gave rise to new forms of warfare. Toxic substances could be made in any quantity, which gave a new and horrendous dimension to violent conflict. We all know of the terrible use of poison gas during the First World War, in violation of the Second Hague Conference of 1907, where the same countries that fought that war, had subscribed to a ban on chemical weapons in the Convention on Land Warfare.
4. Recently, the world has seen the end of the Cold War, but in its aftermath a very real war in the Gulf. Again, the threat of chemical warfare was in the air. Since then, your brothers-in-arms of the UN Special Commission, UNSCOM, have been working hard to uncover what needs to be destroyed. The Iraqi experience has shown us the hard way of getting things done for the sake of security. I sincerely hope that the Convention will prove beyond doubt that there is an easier way, if we are all willing to cooperate.
5. In this respect, I am optimistic. For there would be no use in implementing a truly historic agreement of multilateral disarmament if we did not believe it would make a difference. Obviously it is the other way around: we strive for a safer world because we believe our efforts can and will make a difference.
6. This Convention is a means to that end. It is a tool of which we have to make the best possible use.
7. To make this happen, the Convention needs to be credible. This credibility can only be built up if all States Parties truly participate and are willing to show others that they are complying with the rules they have agreed to. In other words, the declarations by States Parties and the on-site inspections that will be carried out by the OPCW will form the basis for confidence in the fact that the Convention is working. Together they are the key to effective verification that parties to this Convention do not, under any circumstances, develop, produce, stockpile or use chemical weapons.

8. I would now like to direct my comments to you, the 80 participants of the second course that begins today. You, inspectors-to-be, will perform the crucial task of verifying compliance. You are about to enter an intensive and sometimes difficult process, operating under unfamiliar circumstances and, some of you, in unfamiliar languages. I commend you for your willingness to undertake this journey and hope you will find the training programme rewarding. In six months time, you will know whether you will have passed the test, or not. I am told that from the first course, almost every candidate was eventually selected. I have every hope that you will perform just as well or even better.
9. The Netherlands government attaches great importance to the Chemical Weapons Convention, and has shown on several occasions its willingness to act accordingly. Personally, I consider it a privilege to once again provide you, participants to the second course, with the facilities to start your training. I sincerely hope this will become a tradition. I commend the Prins Maurits Laboratory of TNO once again for its valuable contribution to the courses to be taught. Last, but certainly not least, I commend you, Director-General Bustani, and through you your entire staff, for all your tireless efforts to make the OPCW really work. You can count on the continuing Dutch support, both as host country to the organisation and as a State Party to the Convention.
10. A year ago, the first inspection course started at Woensdrecht. On that occasion, the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Convention, Mr Ian Kenyon, expressed concern that some key States had not ratified the Convention. Since then, we have seen the ratification by important countries. Let me name a few: Iran, the Russian Federation, China and Pakistan. By doing so, both countries set an outstanding example that, hopefully, will convince others to do the same.
11. It is high time for those countries that have an obligation to destroy chemical weapons, to begin that process. As you are probably aware, the Netherlands has expressed its willingness to make a modest contribution and assist Russia in the destruction of its vast chemical arsenals. We should regard the dismantlement of these arsenals as a common European problem, a negative heritage from the past. Fifteen million Ecu, pledged by the European Commission, is a very positive sign indeed, and a good start. I know that other countries are also interested in assisting Russia in this field, for instance Germany, the USA, Sweden and Finland.
12. Six months from today, 80 candidates from 37 different nationalities will be ready to undergo the final selection. This will be an important day for you. It will be an important day for your countries and for the Netherlands as the host country. It will be an important day for the OPCW too. But finally and foremost, it will be an important day for the world community, for we will have made another small step on the long road to a world without chemical weapons.

**WELCOMING ADDRESS
BY
JOSÉ MAURICIO BUSTANI
DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE OPCW**

1. Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,
2. It gives me great pleasure, on behalf of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, to welcome you all to this opening ceremony for the inauguration of the second training course for OPCW inspectors. I would like to thank Major-General Homan for his kind words and for co-hosting this important event. I would also like to extend a particular welcome to His Excellency, Mr Voorhoeve, Minister of Defence of the Netherlands. I am pleased to have this opportunity to meet with him in person.
3. Those of us who are familiar with the Chemical Weapons Convention are keenly aware of the central importance of the role of on-site inspections conducted by the OPCW in the system of verification created under the Convention. Together with the declarations being submitted by States Parties to the OPCW, on-site inspections are the key to enabling States Parties to the Convention to demonstrate their commitment not to develop, produce, stockpile or use chemical weapons. It follows from this that the OPCW must train and select highly qualified professionals from a broad range of Member States to ensure that a competent body of inspectors is at our disposal to perform this fundamental and complex task. With that aim in mind, the first training course, which was conducted early in 1997, resulted in the eventual recruitment of 126 inspectors during the same year. Today's ceremony marks the commencement of training for a second group of 80 potential inspectors who, once they have successfully completed the course, will be qualified to join the Inspectorate of the OPCW.
4. Bringing together such a group has involved a great deal of work. It is rewarding for all of us who have been involved in this process to be here today, to see our efforts bear fruit. I want to take this opportunity to thank those Member States which put forward candidates for this training course. I know that you will join me in thanking those members of my staff who have worked long and tirelessly on the preparations for this. Thanks are also due to those Member States which have offered to support this training course: China, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, India, Italy, the Netherlands, Romania, the Russian Federation, the Slovak Republic, Spain, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. In offering this support, these Member States are sharing valuable know-how which is essential in ensuring that the OPCW has effective, professional inspectors. In this regard I want to express my special appreciation to the Government of the Netherlands, our Host Country, as well as to its delegation to the OPCW, and to the City of The Hague. Particular thanks are also due to the management of the TNO PML (Toegepast Natuurwetenschappelijk Onderzoek/Prins Maurits Laboratory), as well as to the personnel here at the Netherlands Defence College in Ypenburg who

have welcomed us, and who have shown unfailing courtesy, good humour and competence in dealing with us. For an international organisation such as ours, which will require on-going training of its inspectors, the opportunity to use such an excellent facility is of tremendous assistance. I sincerely hope that this invaluable relationship will continue into the future.

5. Let me direct my comments for a moment to those here today who are about to embark on the training course. The journey which you are about to begin will be an intensive and sometimes difficult process, especially because you will be operating in unfamiliar environments. Many of you will also not be working in your mother tongue. Do not be discouraged. I am not working in my mother tongue either. You have succeeded so far - it is an achievement in itself to be here today, having been selected from over 1,500 original applicants. The large number of applications for this course did not exactly make it easy to select the trainees. Not only must OPCW inspectors be experts in their field, they must also be capable of working together in an international team and in a wide variety of difficult and sometimes politically sensitive situations. I am confident that each and every one of you has the necessary devotion, concentration and discipline to complete this course successfully and to go on to become a capable and highly professional inspector.
6. As inspectors, you will join a young and dynamic organisation at a very crucial moment in its development. Although less than one year has elapsed since the Convention entered into force, a great deal has already been achieved. In the very near future we will be moving into our new headquarters in The Hague. Furthermore, we have almost finished recruiting staff, and the launching of this training course now represents a major step towards an effective, competent and efficient Inspectorate. Since the Convention entered into force, the OPCW's verification activities have gone well, with 134 inspections having been completed in more than 22 States Parties. The reports that I have received from those States Parties which have been inspected have complimented us on the professionalism of our inspections.
7. Of course, certain difficulties have been experienced during some inspections, mostly due to differing interpretations of certain provisions of the Convention. It is our responsibility to learn from this by evaluating our experiences, monitoring our progress and adapting our procedures where necessary and possible, as well as by taking into account comments from National Authorities and delegations. Through this process of evaluation, we have already identified the need to train inspectors, not just in the technical aspects of inspections, but also in the broader, and often less clear cut, political aspects of conducting inspections. OPCW personnel in the field must not only be technical experts, but must also be able to display, when required, the necessary political sensitivity to specific situations. Inspector training, now and in the future, will accordingly also address these aspects of inspections, thus preparing inspectors for situations which require informed and astute political judgement and awareness. It is my intention to ensure that, once the initial training of OPCW inspectors has been completed, they are regularly updated about relevant political developments in the context of the broader staff development programme.

8. It is also important to bear in mind that Member States ratify this Convention on a voluntary basis, and have therefore made individual commitments to comply fully with the spirit and the letter of the Convention. This is particularly important during routine inspections of facilities on the territory of a State Party, when our primary role is to assist the State Party in question to demonstrate its adherence to the Convention. Routine inspections are not a search for the guilty - they are a means of allowing each State Party to demonstrate that it is fulfilling its voluntary undertaking to adhere to the terms of the Convention. This does not mean that we should turn a blind eye to deficiencies, or that we should neglect to seek clarification where necessary, but it does mean that we should conduct our work courteously, and that we should be as tolerant as is possible under the circumstances.
9. It will also be important for inspectors to give careful thought to the cultural differences amongst our Member States. It is important always to remember that a chance comment or action that might be perfectly acceptable in one country could well be regarded as extremely offensive in another. I realise that all of this will make your task more difficult but, at the end of the day, the role of an inspector is all about anticipating difficulties, and thus being better able to resolve them. Maintaining your composure - particularly when you are tired, travel weary, and facing a difficult situation - is not easy, but it is a skill which we must all acquire if we are to succeed in our mission. It is of paramount importance for us all to develop our negotiating and diplomatic skills to the greatest possible extent.
10. In common with all staff in the Secretariat, inspectors will need to be aware of the critical importance of observing, without exception, all the rules relating to the handling of confidential information. Staff members must observe these rules beyond the strict confines of the workplace, into the domain of their private lives. Careless talk, for example, can be as damaging as careless handling of confidential information. The importance assigned to this subject in this training course reflects the importance of developing and maintaining an ethos of confidentiality in all our work. You will learn that confidential information can be provided to Secretariat staff only on the basis of the "need to know principle", in order to reduce to an absolute minimum the number of staff members of the Secretariat with access to confidential information of States Parties. As Director-General, I have been entrusted with primary responsibility for ensuring the protection of confidential information. Since my appointment, I have taken this obligation very seriously indeed. I expect each and every trainee to scrupulously observe the stringent rules which have been put in place for the handling and protection of confidential information.
11. However, serious and important matters such as the full and conscientious implementation of the OPCW's confidentiality regime should not distract us from our pleasure today at marking the first step of the trainees enrolled in this course towards becoming part of what I see as the OPCW family. When I took office last year, it was clear to me that, while the Inspectorate is - if you do not mind the expression - the soul of the OPCW, all OPCW personnel are part of one team and of one family. I want to stress the integral oneness of everything - with each part playing its own essential role in a carefully balanced whole. I know that this concept is particularly difficult to grasp at present, physically divided as we now are amongst several different facilities

and locations, but I am hopeful that, with the move to the new headquarters building in the very near future, it will become evident that there are not two classes of individuals in

the OPCW - inspectors and the rest. Inspectors are as much part of the staff as, for example, the receptionist or myself for that matter. As Director-General I have striven, and will continue to strive, to develop a cohesive team which works together to achieve our common goal - the ultimate complete elimination of chemical weapons.

12. On that note, may I close by once again thanking all those who have contributed to the course and by extending a warm welcome to all the trainees. I wish you every success in the coming months, and look forward to hearing encouraging reports of your progress.

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