



OPCW

Technical Secretariat

Office of the Director-General
15 January 2003
S/332/2003
ENGLISH only
Unofficial electronic version

**STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL
OF THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT OF
THE ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS
AT THE FIFTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
20 NOVEMBER 2002**

Mr President,

1. It is a great privilege for me to address the United Nations General Assembly for the first time since I was appointed Director-General of the Technical Secretariat of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) last July. I would also like to extend to you, Mr President, my most sincere congratulations on your election to this position, to which you bring experience, diplomatic skills, and the respected voice of a country, the Czech Republic, whose contributions to the objectives and purposes of the Chemical Weapons Convention are well known.

Mr President,

2. The presence of a Director-General of an organisation like the OPCW at the United Nations universal body, the General Assembly, is as natural as it is necessary. It is natural, because our Convention, and the organisation it has brought to life, are legitimate expressions of multilateralism in terms of disarmament and international security, a field where the central role of the United Nations is widely recognised. It is necessary, because the Chemical Weapons Convention and the OPCW have a message to convey to you this year, and in fact every day of the year, given that our work, like yours, simply cannot stop.
3. The United Nations has recognised the OPCW as the organisation responsible for activities to achieve the comprehensive prohibition of chemical weapons, in accordance with the Convention. At the same time, the OPCW, as stated by the relationship agreement between the two organisations, recognises the central role the United Nations undoubtedly plays in international peace and security.
4. A close cooperation between the UN and the OPCW seems to me self-evident. We are determined to work jointly to achieve mutual objectives, by maintaining a close working relationship with the Secretariat of the United Nations at all relevant levels, and by making sure that effective coordination is reached in the different areas where

the UN Charter and our mandate can converge, for the benefit of disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

5. The organisation I represent is the single international institution providing for disarmament, for non-proliferation, and for international cooperation and assistance at the same time. We verify the destruction of the huge, existing arsenals of chemical weapons. We monitor the chemical industry and trade-related activities in listed chemicals to make sure that they are consistent with the provisions of the Convention. We assist, and remain ready to provide help for Member States in need of reinforcing or creating their own protective capacities; and in cases of an attack with, or threat of an attack with chemical weapons, we will stand beside those in need. Through our Organisation, these three unique elements – disarmament, non-proliferation, and international cooperation and assistance – find their indispensable articulation in the CWC, and become integral parts of a single, united effort. In this sense, Mr President, the CWC stands as an example of what can be achieved when the political will exists to tackle questions of global concern through the formidable power of an internationally agreed instrument.
6. As I explained in my address to the First Committee during its “action week” last month, the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention are making substantive progress in achieving the goals set out by this treaty. The destruction of chemical weapons continues. And this is indeed crucial, as we are not talking here of a mere clean-up operation of the remnants of the Cold War.
7. We are dealing with weapons of mass destruction – tens of thousands of munitions, seas of deadly chemical agents – all weapons of choice for terrorist groups, weapons that have been used in recent inter-State conflicts and that, unfortunately, remain within the inventories of some states. OPCW inspectors are active in checking destruction activities in all the declared possessor states’ facilities. On this front, the task is herculean, but progress is being made by the minute.
8. In the United States of America, the goal of the destruction of 20% of the stockpiles of Category 1 weapons has been completed. India has also met this crucial threshold. Another State Party is making progress towards that goal, with approval having been given by the Conference of the States Parties for it to meet this target by April 2003. In Russia, where the largest stockpile of about 40,000 metric tonnes of warfare agents remain to be destroyed, agreements have been reached within the OPCW, and a number of decisions have been taken that will, hopefully, enable the Russian Federation to meet its obligations in terms of the destruction and also conversion of some facilities to permitted purposes.
9. In this respect, we are greatly heartened, and warmly welcome, the 10 plus 10 billion US dollars for these and related purposes over the next 10 years, approved by the G8 countries at the Kananaskis summit. Slowly but surely, the OPCW, together with the Member States, is creating the conditions for a world actually free from these weapons of mass destruction.
10. Our work, Mr President and distinguished delegates, is very demanding from a technological and scientific point of view, as it deals with listed chemicals which, in most cases, do have legitimate civilian applications. The same can be said about the technologies involved, which fall under the well-known label of “dual use”. This is

why we have to make sure that the Technical Secretariat is in a position to uphold the core provisions of the Convention in the light of the breathtaking pace of progress in chemical industry worldwide. This is an area where we are currently concentrating our efforts, in order to ensure the future relevance of the CWC to all States Parties.

11. While we continue our relentless efforts to oversee chemical weapons destruction activities, we must also note that this activity will demand ever greater efforts from the Organisation in the very near future. Possessor states are announcing the coming in line of new destruction facilities. This will have a considerable impact on our verification plans, which will grow accordingly. The anticipated steep rise in verification activities is a clear indication of the challenges which lie ahead for the Organisation.
12. But the quantitative increase in verification activities is not the only issue. This is because the Chemical Weapons Convention is not just an instrument of multilateral disarmament.
13. In parallel with the monitoring functions at chemical weapons-related facilities, the CWC addresses the equally complex and certainly more elusive problem of the proliferation of instruments of chemical warfare. Given the vast scope of the chemical industry worldwide, an efficient control of chemical proliferation is an arduous task, which the Technical Secretariat has to face within the margins of its limited resources, especially against the backdrop of the growing number of facilities to be monitored.
14. The number of inspections will go up, but the nature of the exercise will also be altered by the combined influence of new technologies, evolving industrial methods, and the lessons learned in the past few years by our inspectors. Whilst facilities producing Schedule 1 and 2 chemicals will be a permanent focus of the OPCW, we shall also widen the scope of the monitoring activities in industry in general terms. This process will be gradual, and it will be defined in consultation with the Member States, and fully in line with the Convention.

Mr President,

15. International cooperation and assistance are much more than good intentions under the CWC. Our activities in the field of international cooperation allow our Member States to become full partners in discharging their treaty obligations. The CWC, as is frequently said, is not a self-executing document. It requires constant interaction and interrelationship between the Technical Secretariat and the Member States through their National Authorities, activities which are indispensable both for verification purposes, and also for the enactment of implementing legislation and chemical export controls at a national level.
16. Article X mandates us to provide assistance in the case of chemical weapons use or the threat of their use. In the light of the importance of this commitment by the OPCW, we have been actively working to improve our preparedness and availability, not only in actual emergencies, but also in the area of capacity building. Two months ago in Croatia, we conducted our first large-scale exercise, which allowed us to test, under real life conditions, our preparedness for chemical attacks and emergencies. We intend to continue with similar efforts in the near future, hopefully with the support and contribution of other international organisations, beginning with the

United Nations, as there are many areas where synergetic efforts can and must be found in this area.

17. Threat perception and a new sense of urgency have become apparent after the tragic attacks in the United States of America in September 2001. Assistance has finally been understood as a necessity, especially for states lacking the resources to protect themselves against the possibility of an attack with chemical agents. Following the terrorist attacks on the United States of America on 11 September 2001 and the global realisation of the possibility that terrorists might use weapons of mass destruction in the future, an increasing number of States Parties have invoked those provisions in the Chemical Weapons Convention that request the Technical Secretariat to provide expert advice, and that help to strengthen their protective capacity. An increasing number of protection courses have been delivered by the OPCW in 2002, and some additional ones have already been scheduled for 2003, for the benefit of Member States in Central Asia and Africa.

Mr President,

18. The OPCW is not a counterterrorist agency, but it is clear that active implementation of the treaty provisions can help counter this looming menace. Doing this through a multilateral instrument like the CWC has the additional advantage of rallying together forces that would otherwise remain unconnected, at a time when the struggle for already scarce resources is becoming acute.
19. In December 2001, the States Parties and the OPCW Technical Secretariat jointly identified a number of areas where a useful contribution to the struggle against international terrorism can be made. These include the promotion of universal adherence to the Convention; the enactment of adequate national implementation legislation, including penal legislation; the full and effective implementation of the provisions related to the destruction of chemical weapons capabilities; full and effective implementation of the provisions related to inspections in the chemical industry, and transfers of scheduled chemicals to States not Party; and the further development of the OPCW's capabilities to respond to requests for assistance in cases of use or the threat of use of chemical weapons.

Mr President,

20. While addressing the General Assembly of the United Nations, I cannot fail to mention the high priority we attach to the principle of the universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention. With 147 States Parties, the Convention already embodies a significant number of UN Member States. But the Chemical Weapons Convention is an international agreement open to all States, without exception.
21. For this reason, we have been consistently calling upon states that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to this treaty. To this end, we have also designed several programmes and outreach initiatives to make sure that all states willing to join the family of nations opposed to chemical warfare can do so easily.
22. For a global agreement like this, which entails security implications for all the Member States, ratification by all is our permanent objective, and we continue to work towards that end. We have to acknowledge that some states outside the purview of the CWC pose clear proliferation concerns. But for some others, the overall

security scenario prevailing in their respective regions could be a determining, and perhaps a deterring, factor.

23. All these elements have to be borne in mind when we tackle the issue of universality. The overriding notion remains, however, that this is a treaty where all states, possessor and non-possessor alike, have something to benefit from in terms of their own security first and foremost, and also in other important areas relating to the peaceful uses of chemistry.

Mr President,

24. In a few months, in accordance with the CWC provisions, we will conduct the First Review Conference since the Convention entered into force. The principal purpose of the exercise will be to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the operation of the Convention from a legal and a technical standpoint. The review conference will allow us to look into the past, to see what has been done and achieved in the first five years of operation of the treaty, and also, perhaps more importantly, to identify the most urgent tasks we will have to face in the next five years.
25. States Parties will be able to assess how the verification regime has been implemented so far, and will also be able to provide direction to the Organisation to continue its monitoring of the destruction process and of compliance. During the review conference, Member States will also have an opportunity to consider any scientific and technological developments which are affecting the CWC. Above all, this first retrospective, and at the same time forward-looking exercise, will be an ideal occasion to reaffirm the validity and importance of the Chemical Weapons Convention.
26. If any lessons can be learned from recent events, it will confirm the continued urgency and the validity of concerns over weapons of mass destruction. This is why we expect to have the widest participation from Member States at the highest possible level, as well as the active presence of international organisations and the civil society next April in The Hague.
27. I do hope that the United Nations, as the principal organisation dealing with matters relating to the maintenance of peace and international security will signal, by its presence, the high priority we all attach to the efforts aimed at eliminating weapons of mass destruction.

Mr President,

28. Let us remember that chemical weapons happen to be the category of weapons which the international community has agreed to dispose of completely, without exception, and in a verifiable manner. Let us never forget that the Chemical Weapons Convention is our common contract to achieve this lofty goal. Let us always support the OPCW, which is no more and no less than the guarantor of this process.

Thank you.