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**MESSAGE TO SEVENTEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF
STATES PARTIES TO THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION
The Hague, 26 November 2012**

*Delivered by Mr. Jarmo Sareva,
Deputy Secretary-General of Conference on Disarmament*

I am pleased to send greetings to the Seventeenth Session of the Conference of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

This year's meeting marks the fifteenth anniversary of the Convention and of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Under the Organisation's supervision, 78 per cent of the world's declared stockpiles of chemical weapons have been verifiably destroyed -- a significant achievement. I welcome last December's decision by States Parties on the final extended deadline for the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles, and commend the flexibility that allowed this important outcome. Let us now focus on fulfilling the core objectives of the Convention, and prevent the re-emergence or future use of these horrific weapons.

On 1 October this year, I addressed the high-level meeting of the OPCW at United Nations Headquarters in New York. I noted that 188 States are now Party to the Convention, giving it a near-universal membership. Only eight States remain outside the Convention. As a result of your hard work and perseverance, the nightmare of chemical warfare -- a nightmare that has been made a reality for too many -- is now nearly at an end. However, if a world free of chemical weapons is to be fully realized, it is crucial that these eight States join without delay. Together with Director-General Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü, I recently signed a joint letter urging these States to do so.

As always, the United Nations remains committed to working with the OPCW to promote the universality and full implementation of the Convention. The past fifteen years of achievement give justifiable hope that, with continued determination, you can achieve the ultimate goal of a world free of chemical weapons. I wish you every success.