



Monday 26 November 2012

**NEW ZEALAND STATEMENT TO THE 17TH CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES
TO THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION**

**Delivered by Ambassador George Troup,
New Zealand's Permanent Representative to the OPCW**

Mr Chairman

New Zealand welcomes the opportunity to participate in this general debate, and to voice our support for the Chemical Weapons Convention and for the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. We wish at the outset to express our appreciation for the work of the Technical Secretariat and for the efforts of States Parties in fulfilment of the Convention's purpose.

We also record in particular our appreciation for Director-General Üzümcü's leadership over the past year, and his efforts to lead the OPCW from being a body focused primarily on achieving the destruction of existing stockpiles of chemical weapons to one that acts decisively to prevent the re-emergence of such weapons in the future.

Mr Chairman

As was highlighted during the high level meeting in New York earlier this year, the Convention has made – and continues to make – a substantial contribution to disarmament, non-proliferation, and international peace and security. Our collective endeavours have brought us to the point where the complete elimination of declared global stockpiles of chemical weapons is in sight. This is a historic achievement.

Nonetheless, we are mindful that important challenges remain. The OPCW must continue its efforts to ensure that chemical weapons do not re-emerge, and that the Convention's prohibitions continue to be upheld around the world. The goal of universality of the Convention continues to be of central importance, and we call for the few remaining states that have not done so to accede to the Convention without delay.

Mr Chairman

It is essential that the international community presents a strong and united resolve against the use of chemical weapons. We therefore wish to re-state our serious concern at the recently threatened use of chemical weapons by Syria. We take this opportunity to remind Syria of its obligations under international humanitarian law relating to the protection of civilians in non-international armed conflicts. We urge its early, complete, and unreserved adherence to this Convention.

Mr Chairman

National implementation of the Convention is fundamental to its effectiveness. In measuring progress with implementation, it is essential to take into account the constraints often faced by small and developing states, with small bureaucracies, limited resources, and competing legislative priorities.

Targeted assistance with implementation of the complex obligations in the Convention will therefore continue to be required. We trust that the Technical Secretariat will continue its outreach in different regions in 2013. For its part, New Zealand will continue to promote the goal of achieving full implementation of the Convention in our region.

Mr Chairman

The April 2013 Third Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention will be an important opportunity to look ahead and consider how the OPCW can best address future challenges. We look forward to engaging in that Session with the OPCW, with States Parties and observers, and with representatives of civil society.

New Zealand accordingly re-states its full support for the Convention and for the OPCW, as we work towards a world that is genuinely free of all chemical weapons.

We ask that this statement be treated as an official document of this Conference.