



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Seventeenth Session
26 – 30 November 2012

C-17/NAT.5
26 November 2012
ENGLISH only

NORWAY

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR ANNIKEN R KRUTNES
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF NORWAY TO THE OPCW AT THE
SEVENTEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

First let me congratulate you, Mr Chairman, on being elected as Chair of the Seventeenth Session of the Conference of States Parties. We are confident that your vast experience with the Chemical Weapons Convention will be of great value in securing a successful session. Rest assured that you can count on Norway's full support in this process.

Recently we commemorated the fifteenth anniversary for the entry-into-force of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We celebrate the impressive achievements of the Convention. We salute the important work of the OPCW.

These moments of celebration also give us perspective and courage as we direct our attention to the future and recognise that more efforts are needed to ensure that the Convention meets its full potential. We will still need a strong OPCW in key areas such as stockpile destruction, full universality, verification, addressing emerging challenges and international cooperation and assistance.

In spite of the widely recognised progress made, destruction is far from completed and will remain the core objective of this Organisation for years to come. The Russian Federation, the United States of America as well as Libya, have yet to complete their obligations as mandated by the Convention. We strongly encourage possessor States to do their utmost to meet their destruction targets as soon as possible.

Even if the Convention has already created a very strong norm against chemical weapons, we must continue to work towards Convention universality. It is only through universal adherence to the Convention that we will reach a world fully free of these inhumane weapons.

We would like to commend Director-General Üzümcü for his steadfast efforts in this regard. The joint letter to States not Party to the Convention by United Nations Secretary-General and OPCW's Director-General is a timely effort. However, in the quest for universality all States Parties share a responsibility to encourage the eight States which have yet to sign and/or ratify the Convention.

Syria's admission that it possesses a stockpile of chemical weapons has caused widespread and great concern these last months and shows that the threat of chemical weapons is still very real. Norway joins others in urging Syria to act responsibly, not to use these abhorrent



weapons under any circumstances and to keep them secure. We know from the past, also in this region, the unacceptable humanitarian harm chemical weapons will cause if used. International law, binding also for Syria, strictly prohibits the use of chemical weapons.

We have encouraged the Director-General of the OPCW to be ready and prepared to cooperate with any request from the United Nations Secretary-General, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Convention and the Relationship Agreement between the UN and the OPCW. Norway welcomes the clarification of responsibility provided by the conclusion of the Supplementary Arrangement with the UN.

Effective national implementation remains a cornerstone of the Convention. Norway is concerned about the relatively high number of States Parties that have not yet put in place and enforced the necessary legislative and administrative measures and urges all States to do so. We have with interest noted a new proposal by the Technical Secretariat for a tailor-made approach to the implementation of national legislation. This might be an important step on the road to full implementation of the Convention by all States Parties.

One of the main reasons for the success story of the Convention is that it has been bolstered by the OPCW. We must ensure that the Organisation and its' Technical Secretariat are given the political and financial support they need to fulfil their mandate.

Verification plays a crucial role in providing confidence that all states parties are living up to their obligations under the Convention. In this area, the Convention is in the forefront compared with other arms control instruments. As more non-States Parties join the convention, there will be an increased need for verification. It is essential that we make sure the OPCW maintains the necessary capacity for current and future tasks and remains the world's knowledge repository in the field of chemical weapons.

The existing Convention verification regime and national implementing legislation are extensive, but do not reach all relevant communities. The future success of the Convention will also depend on promoting awareness of the Convention and its requirements among a wider audience. This will help support implementation at the national level. Engaging the scientific community could help to ensure that its members do not inadvertently contribute to proliferation or other hostile purposes such as chemical terrorism. At the same time, there is a clear need to avoid duplicating the valuable work being undertaken by other organisations in the area of chemical safety and security.

Norway strongly supports the various programs related to international cooperation and assistance under article XI of the Convention. Norway has made a voluntary financial contribution for the period of 2011 to 2013 to support the OPCW Africa Programme's activities related to capacity building in relation to articles VII, X and XI. Furthermore, Norway recognises the value that a number of member states attach to national capacity building and skills development in areas related to the peaceful use of chemistry, including chemical safety and security.

Norway is convinced that the Convention would benefit from opening up towards relevant stakeholders such as chemical industry associations, NGOs, think tanks, academia and others that can provide valuable ideas and input to the advancement of the Convention. Evidently, we could learn in this respect from the working methods of the Biological Weapons Convention.

The Third Review Conference next year provides an excellent opportunity to further strengthen the Convention. Norway recognises the work of the Open-Ended Working Group for the preparations of the Review Conference under the very able leadership of H.E. Ambassador Nassima Baghli of Algeria, and will continue to contribute to the process in a constructive way. While reviewing the operations of the Convention, the Conference must take into account any relevant scientific and technological development. States Parties should, in this regard, pay special attention to the well founded advice from the Scientific Advisory Board and make sure that they are reflected upon during the Third Review Conference. Fellow delegates, as States Parties we must strive for a review document that can be an important reference document for the next five years.

Finally, I request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Seventeenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties.

Thank you.

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