



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Seventeenth Session
26 – 29 November 2012

C-17/NAT.20
27 November 2012
ENGLISH only

THAILAND

**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. VIRACHAI PLASAI
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KINGDOM OF THAILAND TO THE
ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS AT THE
SEVENTEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,
Mr Director-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

1. First of all, let me join other delegations in congratulating you, Your Excellency Ambassador Peter Goosen, as the Chairperson of this year's Session of the Conference of the States Parties. I am confident that under your able leadership, this Session will proceed smoothly and lead to successful outcomes. Allow me also to extend to the outgoing Chairperson, Ambassador Paul Arkwright, my delegation's and my personal appreciation for his efficient chairmanship and the tremendous progress achieved during the Sixteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties.
2. I also wish to congratulate His Excellency Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü, Director-General of the OPCW, for his comprehensive opening statement, which encompasses all the key aspects of the Chemical Weapons Convention as well as all the issues that require the Membership's attention. I am confident that through the Director-General's tireless efforts, full and effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention will be better ensured, and the challenges that lie ahead of us successfully met.
3. Let me reiterate at the outset the Kingdom of Thailand's constant and firm position that all types of weapons of mass destruction, the existence of which poses a grave threat to humanity and international peace and security, must be completely eliminated. For this reason, the Kingdom is fully committed to the process of disarmament and, with regard to chemical weapons, to the object and purpose of the Convention.
4. It is therefore the Kingdom of Thailand's position that, until the complete elimination of chemical weapons, their timely destruction must remain the top priority of the OPCW. In this perspective, and bearing in mind the Director-General's reports at the



Sixty-Eighth Session of the Executive Council as well as the destruction plans submitted by the concerned States Parties, it is Thailand's hope that the Membership and the Organisation will work together in a cooperative spirit and in an effective manner to achieve this primary objective of the Convention at the earliest opportunity in accordance with the decision made at the Sixteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties.

5. The Kingdom of Thailand on its part has been stepping up its efforts in the past year to implement the Convention and contribute to enhancing the Convention's object and purpose. Our National Authority has been strengthening dialogue and partnership with the Technical Secretariat with regard to our annual declaration of activities as well as inspection of sites in the Kingdom. On 2 March this year, the Kingdom of Thailand signed with the OPCW an Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Organisation, which is expected to be ratified in the near future. These recent efforts continue the momentum generated by the Kingdom's co-organisation, together with the Technical Secretariat, of the sixth challenge inspection field exercise in the Province of Rayong in October and November 2011, an event that proved to be successful indeed.
6. We celebrate this year the 15th anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention. The Convention has come a long way. It has notably, and rightly, been recognised as a highly credible and effective disarmament instrument with the aim of total elimination of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. The verification system provided for under the Convention is considered the most comprehensive to have been formulated for a multilateral agreement in the field of disarmament. For this reason, the Kingdom of Thailand supports the universality of the Convention and urges the remaining States outside the Convention to ratify or accede to it without further delay.
7. Universal adherence to the Convention will inter alia contribute to reducing the risk of chemical weapons falling into the wrong hands. Pending that, due attention must be given by the States Parties to the issue of possible access of non-State actors to chemical weapons. It is in this sense that we believe that the OPCW, which in itself is not a counter-terrorism organisation, can positively contribute to the ongoing global efforts, and in particular to ensuring effective implementation of UNSC Resolution 1540 and the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. The Kingdom of Thailand commends the OPCW for the continued cooperation it has rendered to the 1540 Committee and other relevant UN bodies, including the Counter-Terrorism Committee and the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate. Through this cooperation, the OPCW has shown that its work can complement the international efforts to counter terrorism, in particular to prevent terrorist attacks involving chemicals and raise the preparedness of States to respond to such threat.
8. In our common efforts to further enhance the object and purpose of the Convention and ensure its effective implementation, cooperation among the States Parties can play a vital role. The civil society, the chemical industry as well as other intergovernmental organisations, should also be involved. This is all the more so in light of the expansion of the chemical industry worldwide, including in developing countries. Today, the issues of peaceful use of chemicals, as well as chemical safety and security have become of high relevance. The OPCW can assume its share of

responsibility in this regard in a significant and creative way. In particular, it can work closely with other actors to enhance cooperation among the States Parties' chemical industries in order to promote safe and secure operation of chemical production, transportation and storage. In this regard, my delegation wishes to congratulate the OPCW and all concerned for the successful outcome of the informal meeting between the representatives of the chemical industry and the Member States, which took place in The Hague last September, and the International Meeting on Chemical Safety and Security, which was held in Poland earlier this month. These meetings constitute a case in point on how dialogue and partnership among the OPCW, States Parties and their industries can be developed for the benefit of peaceful, safe and secure use of chemicals.

9. Cooperation should also be developed among the National Authorities in the area of data sharing on imports and exports of scheduled chemicals. In particular, networking among the National Authorities should be encouraged to enable them to monitor and control scheduled chemicals more effectively. More importantly, cooperation among National Authorities will allow them to reduce, if not eliminate, any possibility of discrepancy between the quantities of scheduled chemicals declared by importing and exporting States Parties, and thus contribute to a more effective functioning of the Convention.
10. International cooperation should also be promoted in the field of chemical activities including in the exchange of chemicals, equipment, and scientific and technical information. In this spirit, my delegation reiterates its full support for the decision of the last session of the Conference of the States Parties on the agreed framework for the full implementation of Article XI and, in this regard, wishes to commend the OPCW's continued efforts in organising capacity-building activities under its international cooperation programmes to promote peaceful application of chemicals and legitimate activities of the chemical industry. These activities are of great importance for many countries, especially those with developing economies.
11. The Convention is seen by many as an exemplary achievement of the multilateral efforts on disarmament. The Kingdom of Thailand shares this view. Much however is left to be done, and as we speak the threat of chemical weapons is still hanging over humanity. Most of all, we strongly believe that the States Parties need to explore ways and means to ensure that the Convention will remain relevant once all the existing chemical weapons will be disposed of. It is in this light that we may speak of the transitional time that the Organisation finds itself in, and of the need to address in a timely fashion the future priorities of the OPCW. One of the most challenging tasks will indeed be the prevention of re-emergence of chemical weapons.
12. Therefore, the initiatives taken since 2010 by the Director-General to address future priorities, and the high-level meeting organised by the OPCW at the United Nations Headquarters last October provided a timely opportunity for us all to reflect upon our past achievements as well as the possible way forward, including how to build on the success of the OPCW in order to better respond to future challenges. With the States Parties' continued determination and commitment, my delegation truly believes that the Convention can become an even more effective instrument to ensure for our children a world free of chemical weapons or their threat.

13. In this light, one cannot stress enough the importance of the upcoming Third Review Conference to be held in April next year. The Conference must and will set the tone and the direction for our immediate future and beyond. As we prepare ourselves for this important event, I wish on behalf of my Government to congratulate the open-ended working group for preparations of the Third Review and its Chairperson, Her Excellency Ambassador Nassima Baghli of Algeria, for the excellent work achieved so far. My delegation eagerly looks forward to the first report of the working group, and I wish to assure you, Mr Chairperson, and through you the whole Membership, of the Kingdom of Thailand's commitment to working closely and constructively with the States Parties and the OPCW towards the success of this Conference.

14. In conclusion, Mr Chairperson, I wish to stress that the Kingdom of Thailand fully supports the positions expressed in the statement of the Non-Aligned Movement States Parties and China, which has been delivered by H.E. M. M. Akhondzadeh, Deputy for International Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran. I also wish to request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Seventeenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties.

I thank you.

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