

**NATIONAL STATEMENT OF SINGAPORE
DELIVERED BY
H.E, ONG ENG CHUAN
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SINGAPORE TO THE OPCW
AT THE EIGHTEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES
THE HAGUE, 2 TO 6 DECEMBER 2013**

Introduction

Mr Chairman

On behalf of the Singapore delegation, I warmly welcome your appointment as the Chairman of the Eighteenth Conference of States Parties (CSP). I am confident that the Conference will be a success under your able leadership. I also wish to thank the outgoing Chairman, Ambassador Peter Goosen, for his outstanding work this past year.

Recent Developments - Destruction of Chemical Weapons Stockpiles

Mr Chairman,

2. 2013 has been a year of tremendous challenge on the chemical weapons front. The use of chemical weapons in Syria was a deplorable act. As a small island state, Singapore strongly condemns the use of chemical weapons - which constitutes a violation of international law and a threat to international peace and security - under any circumstances.

3. Nevertheless, the international community has responded swiftly to this act, thereby demonstrating that we remain steadfast in our collective goal of a world free of chemical weapons. Singapore fully supports the efforts of the Joint Mission of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the United Nations that oversees the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons stockpiles. We commend the good progress made thus far.

4. However, the tasks ahead are daunting. Singapore urges the Syrian Government to continue to cooperate fully with the OPCW and the UN to ensure the verification, non-proliferation, and destruction of its chemical weapons as soon as possible, in compliance with its obligations under UN Security Council resolution 2118. Beyond Syria, we continue to encourage all efforts to complete the destruction of stockpiles expeditiously. Singapore is heartened to note that more than 80% of declared chemical weapons have been verifiably destroyed. The complete elimination of this category of weapons of mass destruction must remain a top priority.

5. We would also like to extend our sincere congratulations to His Excellency Ahmet Uzümcü on the OPCW being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize this year, under his steady leadership. The award is an affirmation and recognition of the extensive efforts undertaken by the OPCW to eliminate chemical weapons. To the Executive Council and the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW, we thank you for your tireless efforts.

Universality of the Convention and Current and Future Work

Mr Chairman,

6. Singapore cannot emphasise enough the need for universal membership of the Convention. Universal membership is an important step towards achieving a world free of chemical weapons. 190 States are now Parties to the Convention, representing about 98% of the global population. Singapore

welcomes the accessions this year of Somalia and Syria to the Convention and reiterates our call for the remaining States outside of the Convention to accede to it without further delay.

7. The Third Review Conference, held in April 2013, was a testament to States Parties' dedication to the future of the Convention. The strategic plans from the Third Review Conference must be implemented faithfully in the lead-up to the next Review Conference in 2018. Allow me to outline several areas that Singapore views as important to the continued relevance and effectiveness of the Convention.

Impact of Scientific and Technological Developments on the Convention

8. Scientific and technological developments advance rapidly. The convergence of biology and chemistry has raised concerns about the use of biologically-mediated means to produce scheduled chemicals as well as chemicals containing phosphorus, sulphur and fluorine. Such developments have implications for the Convention. We commend the Scientific Advisory Board's (SAB) continuous efforts to keep abreast of developments in, and to ensure the relevance of the Convention in this fast-changing field.

Verification Regime

9. As a non-possessor State, Singapore sees the verification regime as an important confidence-building measure to ensure that chemical weapons will never re-emerge and as a safeguard for the integrity of the Convention. The work of the Technical Secretariat to ensure the continued effectiveness and efficiency of the verification regime is commendable. We welcome the reviews of the site selection methodology for Other Chemical Production Facilities (OCPFs) and the product group codes to identify facilities of greater relevance to the Convention's objectives.

Article VI Declarations

10. Industry declarations are a cornerstone of verification activities. It is thus important to ensure the timeliness and accuracy of annual declarations. In 2012, 66% of States Parties submitted the Annual Declaration of Past Activities for 2011 on time, as in 2011 for activities in 2010. We strongly encourage States Parties to submit their annual declarations in a timely manner.

11. We also wish to emphasise that the accuracy of declarations is crucial to minimising discrepancies and the duplication of resources. We thus appreciate the Technical Secretariat's expert assistance to States Parties aimed at improving the accuracy of declarations.

12. Singapore has worked with the Technical Secretariat on the Secure Information Exchange Project (also known as SIX Project). We believe that the secure transmission of information would greatly facilitate communication with the Secretariat, as well as with other States Parties. We look forward to more of such initiatives to streamline the declaration process.

National Implementation Measures

13. National implementation measures provide a State Party with the necessary mandate to meet its obligations under the Convention. Singapore notes the assistance provided by the Secretariat in building the capacity of National Authorities and in supporting the implementation of national legislation and administrative measures. We urge States Parties to adopt the necessary

implementation measures and further encourage the Technical Secretariat in its support programmes to States Parties.

Assistance & Protection Programmes under Article X

14. Singapore remains committed in our contributions to the Assistance and Protection programmes under Article X. In May 2013, we conducted the third run of the “Emergency Response to Chemical Incidents Course for Asian States Parties”. To date, over 60 participants from Asia have benefitted from the course. It is our honour to contribute to the Convention’s important work through this course and to facilitate the exchange of experiences between States Parties.

International Cooperation

15. Even as we remain vigilant in preventing prohibited activities, the pursuit of chemistry for peaceful purposes should be promoted. Singapore is glad to be part of the OPCW Associate Programme this year, which promotes exchanges between the chemical industry and the Associates. Two Associates were attached to the chemical industry in Singapore, and we were glad that they benefitted from their experience. We greatly appreciate the Technical Secretariat’s efforts in organising the Associate Programme.

Conclusion

Mr Chairman,

16. The successes of the Convention are significant. However, the challenges ahead require the Convention to adapt to maintain its relevance and achieve its objectives.

17. We must continue to work, with firm commitment and our best efforts, towards universality and the continued relevance of the Convention. Singapore believes that the Convention is instrumental to achieving a world free of chemical weapons.

18. I wish you and all the distinguished delegates present here today a successful Conference. My delegation respectfully requests that this statement be issued as an official document of this session.

Thank you.