



Statement by

Ambassador Christoph Israng

Permanent Representative of Germany to the OPCW  
at the 19<sup>th</sup> Session of the Conference of State Parties

Madam Chairperson, Mr Director-General, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you very much for giving me the floor.

Germany fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union. Naturally, this also includes the gratitude expressed to the outgoing Chairperson of the Conference of State Parties, the Ambassador of Iraq, and the good wishes extended to the new Chairperson, the Ambassador of Croatia.

As you know, disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation have been a top foreign policy priority for all governments of the Federal Republic of Germany. Germans were among the first to develop and use chemical weapons in World War I, but also among the victims. In April of next year, we will remember the first large-scale use of chemical weapons in the area of Ypres in Belgium. This terrible experience means that we have a responsibility, as do all nations of the world, to erase this horrific type of weapons of mass destruction once and for all. Unfortunately, we are not yet there. But in the Chemical Weapons Convention, we have codified the complete and unlimited ban on chemical weapons in international law, and we have set up a vibrant and highly successful international organisation to oversee the implementation of this landmark treaty.

Madam Chairperson,

In order to achieve this goal of a world entirely free from chemical weapons, we have to increase our efforts in several areas of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

#### **First**

- and this is the most obvious duty of this organisation - chemical weapons must not be used at all. It is outrageous that chemical weapons are still used to kill and harm people, in many cases civilians, men, women and children alike. The statement of the European Union includes the concerns and expectations that we have vis-à-vis the Syrian authorities. We hope that this Conference pays sufficient attention to the Syrian chemical weapons programme and sends a strong message to the authorities in Damascus to do more to meet their obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention.

#### **Second**

Existing stockpiles of chemical weapons have to be destroyed safely and without delay. It is therefore with great regret that we have taken note of the announcement by the Russian Federation that it has moved the end date for the destruction of its stock from 2015 to 2020. We urge the authorities of the Russian Federation to make sure that this deadline is met. At the same time, we acknowledge the political will of the Russian Federation to destroy the remainder of their chemical weapons as quickly as possible.

### Third

We must all promote the universality of the Convention. In this context, Germany welcomes the delegations at this Conference representing states that have not yet ratified the Convention or acceded to it. We encourage them to join the global family of the OPCW as soon as possible.

We regret that one State Party rejected the participation of several NGOs from a country that is not yet a State Party. This, in our view, undermines our joint efforts to achieve universal application.

Speaking of NGOs, please allow me to welcome the presence of many NGOs at this Conference. Their participation is highly appreciated as they actively contribute to reaching the goals of the Convention.

### Fourth

In recent years there have been many discussions on toxic chemicals for law-enforcement purposes in different international forums. These discussions focused on toxic chemicals with an incapacitating effect, commonly called incapacitating chemical agents (ICAs). While the Convention contains a comprehensive definition of toxic chemicals, there is no explicit definition of toxic chemicals which may be used for law enforcement. The increasing availability of such substances has caused concerns that, under the guise of law enforcement, a new group of chemical weapons could be developed or produced which would undermine the object and purpose of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Against this backdrop, Germany is of the view that this important issue needs to be discussed at the OPCW. Germany supports any initiative appropriate to that endeavour.

### Fifth

In my statement so far, I have focused on the responsibility of State Parties. But in order to free the world entirely of the danger of chemical weapons, we also have to appeal to the responsibility of individuals – individuals who have the capability to develop and produce chemical weapons. This is the reason why Germany has submitted the proposal of a code of conduct for chemical professionals. With the Nobel Peace Prize, the OPCW and its Director-General have the necessary credibility to start the process and to create a platform that can develop such a text. Similar to the Hippocratic oath for medical personnel, this concise text could lay the moral basis for the work of chemical professionals. At its last meeting, the Executive Council welcomed this proposal. We invite this Conference to do the same and send a sign of encouragement that will move this process forward.

Madam Chairperson,

Let me conclude by thanking the Director-General and all OPCW staff for their efforts to free the world of chemical weapons. We highly appreciate and honour their dedication, their professionalism and their courage. We acknowledge that this work often involves considerable personal risks. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Chairman of the Executive Council for his excellent work in troubled times.

In closing, I would like to request that this statement be circulated as an official document of this meeting of the Conference.

I thank you, Madam Chairperson.