



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Nineteenth Session
1 – 5 December 2014

C-19/NAT.35
2 December 2014
ENGLISH only

NORWAY

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

First of all, let me thank the outgoing Chairperson, Ambassador Al-Ali of Iraq, for the work he has done throughout the past year. I also congratulate Ambassador Vesela Korać of Croatia on being elected as Chairperson of this session of the Conference of the States Parties. We look forward to cooperating with you, and ensure you of Norway's full support in addressing the tasks before us.

Norway has aligned itself with the EU statement. I would, however, like to highlight a few issues of particular importance to Norway.

We have behind us another eventful year for the OPCW. The elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme is the most challenging endeavour of this Organisation in its 17 years of existence. The Executive Council has taken important decisions setting out the conditions and timelines for destruction. The OPCW-UN Joint Mission implemented the decisions and the United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) in a most successful manner. Norway, as others, contributed heavily to the international maritime transport operation of chemicals from the Syrian Arab Republic and notes with satisfaction its positive outcome. Let me once again extend my Government's sincere thanks to the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat, the Special Coordinator Ms Sigrid Kaag and our partners in the operation, for the outstanding work they performed under extremely demanding conditions. To complete the elimination, strong dedication is still needed from technicians and politicians, inspectors and diplomats alike. We welcome the participation of the UNOPS in this effort.

Norway is deeply concerned by the deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. A lasting solution to the crisis urgently requires a solution.

We are also deeply concerned by the conclusion of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission confirming the systematic and repeated use of a toxic chemical, presumably chlorine, against civilians in the Syrian Arab Republic. This is a clear breach of the Chemical Weapons Convention and of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). Norway remains determined to sanction those responsible for the horrific acts.



Norway is also disturbed by the discrepancies discovered in the initial declarations of chemical weapons made by the Syrian Arab Republic. The work of the OPCW Declaration Assessment Team, in this regard, is important and its completion will be welcomed.

We are waiting for the Fact-Finding Mission and the Declaration Assessment Team to issue their final reports and for the Executive Council to decide on their follow up as early as possible.

Norway calls upon the Syrian Arab Republic to continue its cooperation with the UNOPS and the OPCW to achieve the destruction of the remaining production facilities for chemical weapons.

While the most important issue for the OPCW in the near future will remain the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, we must not lose sight of the basic tasks of this Organisation. Implementing the decisions of the Third Review Conference is vital.

First and foremost we underline the importance of completing the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles, and urge the remaining possessor States to strive towards completing their obligations as mandated by the Convention in an expedient and transparent manner.

Norway is encouraged by the developments in the direction of universality over the past years. We welcome Myanmar as observer to this Conference, and urge Myanmar as well as the other States not Party to ratify the Convention and become members of the OPCW. We appreciate the work of the Technical Secretariat in this regard and assure you that Norway is prepared to offer its assistance.

Fostering international cooperation in the peaceful uses of chemistry and to prevent terrorism are important goals. For many States Parties these are major incentives to stay engaged with the OPCW. Norway has contributed to the programmes to assist those countries especially in Africa, and we are ready to continue our support.

As one, or hopefully several more States not Party, join the Convention there will be an increased need for inspection and verification. It is crucial that the OPCW maintains the necessary capacity for such tasks maintaining it as the world's knowledge repository in the field of chemical weapons. In this connection, Sweden with the support of Norway, Bulgaria and South Africa has proposed a decision aimed at allowing the Director-General to rehire OPCW inspectors. We encourage you all to support this initiative.

Norway has actively promoted increased interaction between the OPCW and civil society. External stakeholders, such as chemical industry associations, non-governmental organisations, think tanks, academia and others can provide valuable ideas and input to the advancement of the Convention. We appreciate that this Conference has continued the positive trend and welcome the participation of NGOs to this session.

Engaging the scientific community can help ensure that its members do not contribute to proliferation or other hostile purposes. This is why education and outreach is so important, and we support the intention of the OPCW to enhance efforts related to this in the near future.

Norway supports the initiative taken by Australia to raise attention on the use of toxic chemicals for law enforcement through a side event at this Conference. We welcome a

debate in any appropriate OPCW forum in order to increase transparency and build confidence on this issue.

Finally, may I request that this statement be treated as an official document of this session and be posted on the internal server as well as on the web page of the OPCW.

Thank you.

--- 0 ---