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THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE ORGANIZATION FOR THE
PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS, AT THE FIRST SPECIAL SESSION
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

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Role of the Director-General

As the Conference begins the process of choosing a new Director-General, I would like to share with you some thoughts on the Director-General's role. We shared these views with the previous Director-General as long ago as 1998.

The CWC establishes a hierarchical relationship among the three OPCW organs: the Conference, the Executive Council, and the Technical Secretariat.

In business terms, the Conference represents the shareholders in the OPCW. The Conference acts as the "principal organ of the Organization". It oversees the implementation of the Convention and the activities of the Executive Council and the Technical Secretariat.

The Executive Council represents the Board of Directors of the OPCW. It serves as the "executive organ of the Organization", promoting the effective implementation of, and compliance with, the Convention. The EC supervises the activities of the Technical Secretariat, facilitates consultations and cooperation among States Parties, and reports to the Conference.

The Technical Secretariat represents the operational staff of the OPCW. It assists the Conference and the Executive Council in performing their functions. In particular, the Technical Secretariat carries out the verification measures provided for in the Convention.

The Director-General is the chief executive and operating officer of the Technical Secretariat, responsible for the organization and functioning of the Technical Secretariat. He is appointed by the member states and he serves at their pleasure. The Director-General implements the policies established by the Conference (shareholders) and the Council (board of directors) and reports to them. He also makes recommendations on policy issues for their consideration and assists the member states in reaching agreement.

While the Director-General must operate within the boundaries established by the Convention and the policy organs, he is not a mere functionary who is restricted to following explicit orders. Rather, the Director-General should pursue the goals of the Convention energetically, with creativity and broad vision. The Director-General should actively promote universal adherence to the Convention and defend the integrity of its implementation.

As the chief administrative officer, the Director-General must ensure that the resources provided by member states are effectively used to carry out the CWC verification regime and other functions specified in the CWC. The Director-General should have reasonable managerial freedom and be allowed to make needed operational decisions. At the same time, the Director-General should extend the same freedom to the qualified staff in the Technical Secretariat who were selected on the basis of their experience and professionalism. If a policy is lacking or is unclear, the Director-General should call this to the attention of the policy organs and seek their guidance. When preparing recommendations on important issues, he should consult informally with key officials, group coordinators, and key delegations.

The Director-General must respect the limits established by the Convention and the policy organs and not “push the boundaries” or free-lance on controversial issues. The Director-General should keep member states informed about his and the Technical Secretariat’s activities and plans, and not surprise them with an abrupt action or decision. The Director-General should seek to unite the member states, just as the member states should seek to resolve their differences and reach a consensus.

To conclude, the United States is a leading supporter of the Convention, a major contributor to the OPCW, and a country extensively impacted by the CWC’s verification regime. We seek a close and cooperative working relationship with both the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat. Our overarching objective in this relationship is to ensure that the object and purpose of the Convention are realised.