

Mr President,

On behalf of Director-General Ahmet Üzümcü of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, I would like to thank you for your kind invitation to address the Seventh Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention. Coming from an Organisation which is based in the Netherlands, I can attest to the skill and competence of Dutch diplomacy, and I am confident that you will be successful in your endeavours over the next three weeks.

I. The shared history of the BWC and CWC

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentleman,

The BWC and CWC together constitute a comprehensive prohibition against two of the three categories of weapons of mass destruction. These two treaties share the same historical roots in the age-old taboo against the use of poison in warfare, first codified in the Hague Declaration of 1899. Over 85 years ago, this norm was further codified in the 1925 Geneva Protocol, of which both of our treaties are direct descendents as recognised in their preambles. Together, the BWC and CWC represent a vital advance over the Geneva Protocol that prohibited both biological and chemical weapons but fell short of realising its objectives.

It was in the late 1960s that the international community decided to consider chemical and biological weapons separately, with the beginning of negotiations on what became the Biological Weapons Convention of 1972. However, the linkage remained. Its Preamble describes the BWC as “a first possible step” towards the achievement of the effective and comprehensive prohibition of chemical weapons and, by Article IX, all BWC States Parties undertook to continue “negotiations in good faith” towards a chemical weapons convention.

As we all know, it was another 20 years until these negotiations bore fruit and the CWC was finalised. And here is another linkage, for this very building is the birthplace of the CWC, negotiated as it was in the Conference on Disarmament. The shared ancestry of the two treaties was emphasised again in the preamble of the Chemical Weapons Convention which reaffirms the principles and objectives of, and obligations assumed, under the BWC.

Taken together the two treaties represent a crucial barrier against the use of disease or poison against humanity and are, therefore, worthy of every effort to protect and strengthen the norms that they established. It is, therefore, incumbent on the international community to ensure that they, representing the essence of tragic historical experiences on the one hand and a resolute determination not to allow those atrocities in the future, must not be allowed to fail.

This brief historical overview hopefully demonstrates that, both in their origins as well as their objectives, the BWC and the CWC have mutually reinforcing complementarities.

However, we must also take into account the significant differences between the treaties as negotiated, and the different ways in which they have been implemented since they entered into force, in 1975 and 1997 respectively. We must always remember that the treaties are distinct legal instruments with discrete mandates and with memberships which, while hopefully one day universal, are today still not identical.

The CWC, with 188 States Parties, enjoys near universal adherence. There are only 8 States that remain outside (Angola, Egypt, Somalia, Israel, Syria, Myanmar, North Korea and South Sudan). Promoting ratification requires not only the dedicated work of the OPCW's Technical Secretariat, but also the use of good offices by States Parties with those States with which they have good relationships. Progress has been made in this regard with some Governments and we hope that in the near future we will increase the number of States Parties to the CWC.

II. A significant difference - verification under the CWC

As is very well known, the most significant difference between our two treaties is that the CWC incorporates a comprehensive and robust verification regime, supported by an institution to monitor its implementation. The OPCW Technical Secretariat employs almost 170 inspectors whose job it is to conduct inspections of chemical weapons-related sites and chemical industry facilities in the 188 States Parties to the CWC. This effort has been the main focus of the OPCW since the Convention entered into force in 1997. I would now like to briefly highlight the main achievements in these areas.

The fact that almost three-quarters of all declared chemical weapons stockpiles will be destroyed by April 2012 is an achievement without parallel in disarmament. In total 71 % of Category 1 chemical weapons have already been destroyed, including in three States Parties which have achieved the complete destruction of their stockpiles. However, the major possessor States, the United States and the Russian Federation, have indicated they are not able to meet the final extended deadline of 29 April 2012 due to reasons which were not anticipated during the negotiations of the Convention and that are unrelated to their commitment under Article I. Hence, the States Parties have been engaged in consultations to find a satisfactory solution for almost two years. Last week, the Conference of the States Parties adopted a decision addressing this issue, which sets out the approach to be taken after the deadline has passed. In addition to continued verification under the CWC regime, the decision establishes a number of confidence-building measures that reassure the international community of the commitment of possessor States with the complete destruction of their chemical weapons stockpiles.

This year witnessed important developments in Libya that underlined the value the international community attaches to the elimination of chemical weapons, verified by the OPCW. Our inspectors were able to return to work in Libya in early November and conducted their mission under challenging circumstances. We are satisfied that the declared chemical weapons stockpile remains accountable and secure. It is now known that there are additional, previously undeclared chemical weapons stockpiles. We have just received a formal declaration by the Libyan authorities, following which we will proceed, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, to work with them to eliminate the chemical weapons present in Libya. During the Conference, Libya has also advised that it will not be able to meet the final extended destruction deadline.

Preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons as well as their misuse is a multidimensional undertaking with an effective industry-verification regime, together with data monitoring, as its foundation. It is a crucial confidence-building measure that will sustain the long term viability of the Convention as an instrument of security against chemical weapons. The verification regime must keep pace with the growing number of chemical facilities and capabilities that did not exist at the time the Convention was negotiated. To date, the OPCW has conducted over 2,100 inspections in the global chemical industry since the Convention entered into force. I wish to acknowledge here the excellent cooperation extended to the OPCW by the National Authorities and the chemical industry globally. Last week, the Conference adopted a budget for 2012 which includes an increase in the number of industry inspections conducted per year from 209 this year to a total of 219 for 2012, increasing to 241 by 2014. This will help us to achieve both a broader geographical distribution of industry inspections and a significantly shorter interval between inspections in any State Party with inspectable facilities.

III. Areas of common interest

I would now like to turn to four areas which I believe are of common interest between the CWC and BWC. The lessons learned in promoting the fundamental objectives of one treaty can be of relevance and use in the case of the other even though the paths to implementation may differ.

The first of these is full and effective national implementation which is a clear prerequisite for the good functioning of both treaties. Legal regimes embody purpose and expectations of fair play. In our case, effective implementation of the CWC not only builds confidence in the international community, it also brings home the security benefits of the Convention. Our experience has demonstrated that, rather than an imposition, national implementation should be seen as an advantage. A legal framework through legislation and the means to enforce it create the domestic capacity to monitor, to report, and to guide activities involving chemicals along peaceful and productive lines. A robust domestic regime conveys a strong message to those who may harbour malicious intent. An added benefit of establishing such laws and regulations, and domestic capabilities, is the ability to comply with other international obligations such as those established under United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), and perhaps also those obligations under Article IV of the BWC. However, more than 50 percent of States Parties still need to take action to ensure that their legislation covers all key areas of the Convention. This means that we need to re-double our efforts in assisting States Parties in their implementation of the Convention. To do so, our approach needs to become more targeted and also more innovative and, over the next year, we will launch new initiatives beginning with e-learning modules for National Authorities and a cooperation and assistance activities database to facilitate information-sharing between States Parties.

The second area of common interest is the impact of advances in science and technology. Both the BWC and CWC are disarmament treaties tied closely to science, and the dynamic nature of science has a direct impact on our own work. We are facing a time of rapid advances in science and technology. In the OPCW's field of work, new chemical

compounds and production methods are constantly being researched and discovered, affording the global community many benefits but also bringing with them certain risks. The need to understand these changes and to bring them to the attention of our States Parties has never been more pressing. It is, therefore, our responsibility to adequately assess and address new developments that may affect the implementation of the Convention. In the OPCW, our Scientific Advisory Board has a crucial role to play in this regard. In addition, we have just created the post of Science Policy Adviser within the Secretariat who will frame questions from the Director-General to the Scientific Advisory Board, formulate robust scientific policy advice for the DG, facilitate the Secretariat's dialogue with the scientific communities, and monitor and evaluate the implications for the OPCW of longer-term scientific and technological developments.

A topic of direct relevance to both the BWC and CWC is the growing convergence between chemistry and biology, as recognised in the recent report of the National Academies on "Life Sciences and Related Fields", and also in several of the national papers submitted here by States Parties. As the National Academies report states: "The impact of this convergence on the existing arms control system must be better understood in order to draw conclusions about whether adaptations in the application of the existing regimes may be required, and if so, what they should be." In this regard, the Director-General recently requested the Scientific Advisory Board to study this issue and report back to him. The SAB therefore established a temporary working group on this subject which held its first meeting in The Hague two weeks ago. Recognising the need for additional expertise, particularly from the life sciences and the biotech industry, the SAB appointed as members of the group individuals working in these fields. The meeting made a number of recommendations which will be followed up at subsequent working group

meetings in 2012 and 2013. The issue will also be on the agenda of an international workshop organised by the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC) to take place in Switzerland in February 2012.

The third area of common interest relates to assistance and protection in the case of use of chemical or biological weapons. Contemporary security threats include the grim possibility of use of chemical weapons or toxic chemicals in acts of terrorism, while their use in warfare still cannot be completely discounted either. From a number of events and seminars that were held during the course of the year, the expectations of our States Parties emerge clearly in favour of a more pro-active OPCW role in matters of both assistance and protection as well as safety and security against chemical weapons and toxic chemicals. This is an area of existing cooperation between our two treaties, as exemplified during your meetings last year when the OPCW provided presentations on its assistance and protection and investigations mechanisms, and organised a side event on the ASSISTEX-3 exercise in Tunisia in October 2010. The need for effective operational coordination and information sharing in this area was also recognised in the recent report by the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force on "Interagency Coordination in the Event of a Terrorist Attack Using Chemical or Biological Weapons and Materials". In the future, the OPCW will adopt a regional approach to its assistance and protection activities focused on developing capacities and expertise within regions.

The fourth and final area of common interest between our two treaties is international cooperation in the peaceful uses of science. International cooperation in the peaceful use of chemistry was an important incentive for many countries to join the Convention and

remains a major motivation for them to remain engaged. We look forward to deepening our international cooperation programmes while ensuring that these are optimised to also serve the Convention's effective implementation. In November 2010, the OPCW hosted a very useful workshop on our international cooperation activities, which involved participants from governments, international organisations, the private sector and from civil society. The workshop made numerous recommendations for ways in which the OPCW can strengthen and improve its activities in this field. Just last week, and based on the outcome of the workshop, the Conference adopted an agreed framework for the full implementation of Article XI which will provide a new impetus to our international cooperation activities and the necessary guidance to make them more effective. There are expectations in the OPCW's singular role to facilitate international cooperation in promoting its security goals, as well as opportunities for peaceful application of chemistry. These tasks are multifaceted and interlinked. The benefits that they offer to States Parties translate into general incentives for greater involvement in making the overall regime strong and effective.

IV. Transition of the OPCW

After this review of areas of current common interest, I would like now to turn to the future. ^{of the OPCW.} The significant progress in destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles means a reduction in the number of chemical weapons inspections and a consequent adaptation of the OPCW's human-resources requirements. We therefore anticipate a considerable decline in the number of inspectors working for the Organisation during 2012, with the figures rising slightly in 2013 and then remaining relatively stable in 2014. Internal

changes in the Secretariat will be necessary, but must not compromise the integrity and assurance of operational effectiveness including the continued verification of destruction activities. In short, there is a need to work on an organisational design for the future—one that meets all of our needs and expectations—and one that is established with the active collaboration and support of our States Parties.

Progress made in the destruction of chemical weapons is an important—though not the only—factor that defines the transition for the Organisation. In December 2010, the Director-General established an Advisory Panel on future priorities of the OPCW chaired by Ambassador Rolf Ekéus of Sweden. The Panel completed its work earlier this year. Reactions to its report have been positive. At an informal retreat for Ambassadors held in September, strong support was affirmed for our continued work, guided by all the core objectives of the OPCW. At the same time, it was recognised that some change is necessary to ensure that the Organisation is able to respond to new circumstances and contemporary challenges in the medium to longer term. Attended by nearly 90 representatives to the OPCW, the occasion underlined the continued commitment of States Parties to the Convention.

The reduction in budget, as well as in the personnel strength of the Secretariat, is an indicator of a future that will be different from the past. It is important to look beyond the figures and to focus on the mission the Organisation was created to fulfil. There are critical and long-term goals that will outlive the attainment of the complete elimination of chemical weapons stockpiles in possessor States—important though that objective will remain. The true value of the OPCW is in its task as a guarantor of security against

chemical weapons. This, under the Convention, is an enduring mission. It is best achieved, as our laudable culture of cooperation attests, through investing further in strengthening the Convention. This includes the universality of the Convention's application, its effective national implementation, a more effective Article VI verification regime, and the harmonisation of our actions, so that the OPCW remains prepared at all times to deal with both contemporary and future security threats.

V. Emerging issues

In the future, as in the past, it will be vital to ensure that the CWC and OPCW remain relevant to contemporary security concerns. Among a number of emerging issues on the OPCW's agenda, there are two which I believe are of relevance to both the BWC and CWC and, with regard to which, I think that the OPCW can benefit from the experience of BWC States Parties.

The first concerns issues of chemical safety and security. A broader approach to security underlines the need to focus on such issues. In September this year, the OPCW hosted a major conference on international cooperation and chemical safety and security, as a contribution to the International Year of Chemistry. A key result of the conference is the clear recognition by States Parties that the OPCW is a forum suited to and appropriate for concerted action in the field of chemical safety and security. A related area concerns the exchange of information and sharing of best practice regarding safety and security management, and the potential role of industry standards. I know that you have discussed issues relating to biosafety and biosecurity and, while the issues are not the same, it

would be beneficial for our discussions on chemical safety and security to hear your experiences and, where appropriate, to learn from them. With the support of our States Parties, we intend to continue our activities in the field of chemical safety and security.

The second area concerns education and outreach. I have noted with interest that this is a subject upon which there has been much activity within the BWC framework, not only by States Parties, but also by other stakeholders, such as professional associations, private industry, academia and civil society. To date, our outreach activities have involved efforts to promote awareness and understanding of the requirements and goals of the Convention amongst the general public, the scientific community, including students, chemists and chemical engineers as well as scientists who are active in the life sciences field. However, we can and should do more in this area. More concretely, future generations must be made fully aware of their responsibilities as scientists and engineers when dealing with materials that could present a danger to humankind. I believe that the discussions which have taken place here over recent years, could offer valuable lessons for our activities in The Hague. Our Scientific Advisory Board recently decided to establish a temporary working group on education and outreach and, once constituted, I am sure that its members will be keen to benefit from your experiences in this area when formulating their advice to the Director-General.

VI. Conclusion

Mr President,

Allow me to conclude by expressing my gratitude to you and the States Parties to the BWC for inviting me to address the Seventh Review Conference. I do hope that the description of our experiences that I have given today is useful. And I hope that we can learn from your experience here this month as we begin preparations for the Third CWC Review Conference which will convene in April 2013.

As I mentioned earlier, we in the OPCW remain prepared to further assist you all in benefiting from our work in promoting the universality and effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. I wish you success in your deliberations and thank you for your attention.