

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE ONE THOUSAND AND SEVENTY-SEVENTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 7 August 2007, at 10.10 a.m.

President: Mr. Jürg STREULI (Switzerland)

The PRESIDENT (spoke in French): I declare open the 1077th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Today we have two subjects in relation to weapons of mass destruction to deal with: chemical weapons and biological weapons. I propose that we discuss the two separately, starting with chemical weapons. But before I give the floor to the speakers on my list for the plenary meeting today, I wish on behalf of the Conference on Disarmament and on my own behalf to warmly welcome a new colleague who has recently assumed the responsibilities of representing his Government in Geneva, Mr. Faysal Khabbaz Hamoui, Ambassador of the Syrian Arab Republic. I take this opportunity to assure him of our full cooperation and our full support in the performance of his functions. I particularly look forward to working with him within the team of Presidents of the Conference for this year.

We now turn to today's speakers. On behalf of the Conference on Disarmament and on my own behalf, I would like to warmly welcome Ambassador Rogelio Pfirter, Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, who will be today's first speaker.

Before he was appointed as Director-General by the Conference of the States parties in 2002, a post to which he was once again appointed in 2005, Ambassador Pfirter pursued an outstanding career in his country's diplomatic corps for more than 30 years. During that period, he acquired enormous experience in multilateral negotiations within the United Nations framework and dealt with a wide range of issues relating to international security.

I now invite the Director of OPCW, Mr. Rogelio Pfirter, to make his statement.

Mr. PFIRTER (Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons): Mr. President, allow me first of all to thank you very much for your warm welcome. Allow me also to express my gratitude to the Secretary-General of the Conference for being here today, and indeed to all colleagues.

Mr. President, allow me also to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference and wish you all the best for the success you bring to this important position - your own personal qualifications and well-known diplomatic skills, as well as the admirable contribution of your country, Switzerland, to international endeavours for peace, security and progress, a distinction that is so evident in its status as a worthy host to the United Nations European offices and other international organizations.

For me as Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), it is a unique privilege to address this Conference, for it was here 15 years ago that the negotiations for the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) were concluded and mankind's long-standing aspiration to ban poison as a means of warfare was transformed into a living reality. It was here that the foundation stones for OPCW were laid.

That was a historic moment and an outstanding achievement of the CD. It marked the fruition of an endeavour that was galvanized by the horror triggered by the use of chemical weapons in the Great War and thereafter, including during the Iran-Iraq war and the killing fields of Halabja.

(Mr. Pfirter, Director-General of the Organisation
for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons)

The CWC was the result of a shared vision, painstaking effort and the goodwill and spirit of compromise shown by all members of the CD. In drafting the Convention, the Conference created a disarmament and non-proliferation instrument that is unprecedented in the history of arms control.

For never before had the international community banned so comprehensively an entire category of weapons of mass destruction together with creating the verification tools necessary to assure compliance with these prohibitions.

The Convention also created rights and obligations of far-reaching scope to ensure that chemical weapons were indeed effectively banned, would never re-emerge and that chemistry could only be used for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of humankind.

On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the CWC and the establishment of OPCW, we can account and recount a solid record of accomplishments even as we are aware that a number of challenges lie ahead, and I shall refer to those in the course of my statement, which will go a bit beyond what is customary in disarmament, but I thought it would be appropriate for me to render a full report to this very body, which, as I have said, is the mother of the CWC and consequently of OPCW.

The members of this Conference are quite familiar with the ebb and flow that has affected the wider field of disarmament and non-proliferation and has also impacted your own work.

I believe that the mandate of the Conference as the sole multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament and non-proliferation, and the special expertise and the quality of diplomatic representation that reside here, constitute a rich resource that would be difficult to replicate elsewhere.

I am, therefore, hopeful that you would be able to take the decisions necessary for restoring the kind of dynamism that led to the conclusion of the CWC. That is the need of the hour. The international community continues to look to you, members of the CD, with hope in the face of both old and new challenges in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. These can indeed begin to be addressed effectively through the collective wisdom for which the CD is well known.

To make substantial and concrete progress on non-proliferation and security issues is crucial to international peace and security and in many cases imposes difficult national choices that require courage, determination and sacrifice. But the wisdom of such decisions, which may initially not be apparent, yields enduring benefits in the long term for peace and cooperation between nations. I have some valid experience, I believe, in the matter for in 1991 I headed Argentina's team in the negotiation of the nuclear agreement with Brazil that created the Argentine-Brazilian Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (ABACC) and led to the signing that same year of the tripartite safeguards agreement between Argentina, Brazil and IAEA. Those landmark steps paved the way for the subsequent entry into force in Latin America of the Tlatelolco Treaty and the signing of the NPT by both the South American countries.

(Mr. Pfirter, Director-General of the Organisation
for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons)

I have no doubt that this Conference will find inspiration in its own commendable record and will do what is necessary in order to fulfil the special trust reposed in it by not only States represented here but the larger international community.

To be sure, the CWC - the fruit of your past endeavours - has proved to be a success story defying some sceptics who had thought that a treaty containing such sweeping provisions affecting both militaries and industry and governments as well as the private sector may be difficult to implement.

Contrary to those doubts, the disarmament and non-proliferation regime established by the Convention has continued to grow in strength - gradually, but steadily.

OPCW now boasts a membership of 182 countries, equivalent to over 95 per cent of the world's population. This represents the fastest rate of accession for any disarmament treaty.

Today, nearly 24,000 metric tons of chemical agents have been certified by OPCW as destroyed. This represents 33 per cent of the declared stockpiles worldwide. Eleven facilities where these weapons are being destroyed are currently in operation in five countries.

As regards chemical weapons production facilities, 94 per cent of the 65 such units declared by 12 States parties have either been destroyed or converted to peaceful purposes in accordance with the Convention.

More than 3,000 inspections have been carried out by OPCW inspection teams at over 1,080 military and industrial sites in 80 countries. Eighty-five per cent of our inspections go to military facilities and are weapons-destruction-related.

Over 5,600 participants have benefited from 500 activities in the area of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of chemistry.

Allow me to be more specific concerning the Convention's disarmament achievements and challenges.

Five of the six possessor States requested and were granted extensions in the destruction deadlines. The two major possessors, namely, the Russian Federation and the United States, have until April of 2012, which, under the Convention, is the maximum permissible time period for completing chemical disarmament and constitutes a solemn obligation accepted by all possessor States.

In the Russian Federation, the chemical weapons destruction programme has gained good momentum as a number of new destruction facilities have recently come online. This has led to Russia having accomplished the destruction of 22 per cent of its chemical weapons stockpile. A year ago this figure was less than 11 per cent, showing the rapid recent increase in destruction activity.

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The Technical Secretariat was able to certify the actual percentage I mentioned above after reaching a formal agreement with Russia on the Verification Plan for the Maradykovsky destruction facility. The agreement represents a reasonable and effective response to the situation generated by the two-step wet destruction technology which is being used there and the verification requirements under article IV and the Verification Annex of the CWC concerning the irreversible destruction of all toxic agents and metal parts.

Russia has expressed its commitment to complete the destruction process in accordance with the Convention and has drawn up the necessary plans that reinforce such assurances. I commend this effort and Russia's determination to fulfil its disarmament obligations.

I also applaud the assistance of the G-8 countries and other donors in support of the Russian Federation's destruction programme, and I hope that this vital cooperation will continue and be further reinforced in the future.

The other major possessor State, the United States of America, has destroyed almost 13,000 metric tons of chemical warfare agents. This represents just about 46 per cent of the total United States stockpile and it is an important milestone in the United States destruction campaign. These figures also highlight the commitment of the United States to comply with its obligations under the Convention.

The United States started to destroy its chemical weapons arsenal even before the Convention entered into force for it. It has never looked back. With an extensive body of rules, regulations and other considerations that are designed for safe disposal of toxic substances, technical and legal problems were inevitable in the process of eliminating such massive amounts of chemical warfare agents. The United States resolve to honour its international commitments under the Convention has, however, remained steadfast. The United States has also been a key provider of critical assistance to other possessor States, thus helping them to fulfil their own obligations under the Convention and advance its fundamental purposes.

While the importance of the provisions of the Convention concerning destruction deadlines is evident, it is to the credit of these two largest possessors, the Russian Federation and the United States of America, that they have not wavered in their will to make every effort to uphold their commitments, despite financial, environmental and sometimes domestic legal obstacles.

In the case of other possessors, just a few weeks ago on 11 July, Albania became the first country to completely destroy its chemical weapons stockpile. On its way to reaching this milestone, the country encountered serious technical difficulties and in fact marginally missed its given deadline. But it resolutely pursued the task and with the help of a number of other States parties was able to accomplish the goal. This represents a concrete contribution to the objectives of the Convention and we must all wholeheartedly congratulate Albania.

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for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons)

We must also praise the wisdom and sense of balance shown in dealing with this matter by the Executive Council of OPCW, as well as welcome the fact that the Convention offers enough resilience to deal effectively and constructively with situations as those generated by Albania's inability, for reasons beyond its control, to meet a non-extendable deadline.

I would also like to acknowledge with praise the endeavours of two other countries, India and a State party, who set about the job of eliminating their chemical weapons with unrelenting determination. As a result, India has already destroyed 84 per cent of its chemical stockpile, and by April 2009, is expected to reach its 100 per cent target.

The other State party has accomplished 92 per cent destruction of its inventory and is expected to finish the process by the end of 2008.

I commend them both for their sincerity and their effort.

The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya's chemical weapons stockpile is expected to be destroyed by the year 2011, following the granting by the Conference of States Parties of a request for extensions of its intermediate and final destruction deadlines. Libya recently informed our Executive Council that it was finalizing arrangements for the setting up of the requisite destruction facility for completing this task within those deadlines.

In short, significant progress has been achieved by most possessor States. Yet, as we all know, in the case of the Russian Federation and the United States of America, substantial amounts remain to be destroyed, more so in the case of Russia. The clock is ticking and formidable technical and financial as well as safety, health and environmental hurdles remain ahead.

With the benefit of hindsight and actual experience in dealing safely with massive chemical weapons stockpiles, we can perhaps regard as notably challenging the deadlines that were set for the destruction of chemical weapons. These are some of the most toxic and dangerous substances ever invented and produced, and to eliminate them in a manner that is safe for both people and the environment has proved to be a demanding and immensely expensive task.

In any case, we are encouraged by the visibly strong political commitment to the Convention shown by all possessor States and by the recognition of their solemn obligation to complete destruction by 29 April 2012. While the pace of destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles has not matched the high initial expectations and, as a result, understandable concerns have arisen, we remain steadfast in our goal of ridding the planet completely of chemical weapons. Indeed, we are in no doubt whatsoever that the current stockpiles are doomed.

The Chemical Weapons Convention seeks to establish a comprehensive regime not only just for disarmament but also non-proliferation purposes. All of our States parties need to devote themselves to establishing and reinforcing administrative and legislative measures, as required under the Convention.

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This must be done to ensure that the key provisions of the Convention requiring systematic declarations, industry monitoring, controls on transfers of chemicals and regulatory measures to identify and track chemicals of concern are in place in each and every State party. It is also vital for them to be able to detect, pursue and prosecute any breach of the Convention by their nationals and in any area under their jurisdiction or control.

One of the obvious lessons after 10 years of the Convention's operation is that inspections are not the only mechanism to ensure confidence in compliance. When a State party has a well-established national authority and good comprehensive laws and regulations, we all feel safer and reassured. This also makes it much easier to resolve misunderstandings that might arise - and, indeed, in the beginning frequently arose - for instance, during industry inspections, thus avoiding problems that might give rise to compliance concerns.

I have to say that a great deal of work is still needed in this area from both the Organisation and its member States. We know that despite the passage of several years, national infrastructures and legislation to apply the non-proliferation stipulations of the Convention have considerable room for improvement in many member States.

A major impetus to our efforts to promote national implementation of the Convention was provided by the First Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention, held in 2003, which adopted an action plan to boost effective national implementation globally.

Since then there has been a steady increase in the number of States parties that have initiated the administrative measures and commenced the process of enacting the appropriate legislation, including penal legislation. The number of States parties that have enacted comprehensive legislation has increased from approximately 50 in October 2003 to 77 at present, and 119 States parties have informed the secretariat of the legislative and administrative measures they have adopted. Of these, 102 have submitted the texts of their implementing legislation.

At the same time, the number of States parties that had designated or established their national authority - a step required under the Convention - had increased by the middle of 2007 to 172, out of 182 member States, or 95 per cent of all States parties. While these figures represent satisfactory progress in the implementation of the Plan of Action, more must clearly be done to ensure that the key provisions of the Convention are being implemented domestically.

Further efforts are also being undertaken by OPCW in the full implementation of articles X and XI of the Convention, which cover international cooperation and assistance. These are areas that are of particular importance to our many member States whose economies are developing or in transition.

Contemporary security threats, including the possibility of the use of chemical weapons by non-State actors, have created renewed interest in the ability of OPCW to coordinate the delivery of emergency assistance to States parties in case of an attack or the threat of an attack with

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chemical weapons. Our States parties are also keen on building their national capacities to deal with threats or actual incidents involving the use of chemical weapons or toxic chemicals. We are working purposefully to strengthen such capacity.

The special concern shown in this regard, particularly by developing countries, reflects a growing awareness of the synergy between security and development, something that was not necessarily evident during the negotiations on the Convention.

In that context, the several attacks with chlorine carried out recently in Iraq to kill and injure innocent civilians serve as a stark reminder of the dangers that the misuse of toxic chemicals, even the most common ones, poses to our security, and of the importance of striving to achieve the goals enshrined in the Convention.

While not being an anti-terrorism treaty, the Convention has a contribution to make in this area. This is so both through its full implementation, as agreed by our Executive Council in September of 2001 after the abhorrent terrorist attacks against the United States, and also in the context of the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 of 2004. This resolution imposes an obligation on all United Nations Member States to adopt a series of concrete legal and administrative measures to prevent non-State actors from gaining access to weapons of mass destruction. As regards chemical weapons, the requirements of resolution 1540 coincide with the obligations enshrined in the Convention.

With its extensive legal definitions and provisions for establishing a legal mechanism to prohibit and prevent unauthorized access to toxic chemicals by persons, groups and other entities, the Convention represents a necessary and effective complement to the provisions of the Council's resolution. The adoption and full implementation of those legislative measures help not only to ensure compliance with the Convention but also provide guarantees that any violators of the Convention can be prosecuted and punished, that declarable activities are reported, that transfers of toxic chemicals and precursors are properly monitored, and that transfer prohibitions required under the Convention are effectively enforced.

Our outreach activities and a sustained programme of assistance have contributed to the endeavours of many States parties in closing the gap between joining the Convention and implementing it more effectively. OPCW's experience can contribute towards similar ongoing exercises, for example in the context of meetings of the States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention and by the United Nations to promote in all its Member States the implementation of resolution 1540. Indeed, OPCW has shared and will continue to share its experiences and contribute to the work of those forums.

The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy adopted in September 2006 also encourages OPCW to continue to help States to build their capacity to prevent terrorists from accessing toxic chemicals, to ensure security at chemical and related facilities, and to respond effectively in the event of an attack in which such materials are used.

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In November this year, OPCW will host a meeting in which States parties and representatives of the global chemical industry will have an opportunity to share thoughts and experiences concerning the important issue of protecting critical infrastructure and facilities related to industrial chemicals. This would be the first meeting of its kind and represents an initiative designed to respond to the needs of our States parties in the face of contemporary security threats, especially from terrorism.

While this matter should be of interest to all, it is in my view of particular relevance to the developing world, for it is there that the needs for a safer and more efficient chemical industry are more evident and would contribute to further trade and investment opportunities. In that respect, *mutatis mutandis*, there might be something to be learned from IAEA experience and the assistance that developing countries benefit from in the nuclear safety field through contributions from the European Union and other industrialized countries.

Since I have just mentioned the chemical industry, allow me to recognize and applaud the role that it has played in support of the CWC. Of course, it was this very Conference that had the vision to introduce the innovation which I regard as revolutionary for its time, of inviting the industry to help tune the regime being negotiated. It was a masterstroke that ensured both the adequate involvement of a party legitimately concerned and a balance in the text of the Convention that has been at the root of our achievements on the non-proliferation agenda.

We are committed to seeking the continued engagement and support of industry, which, by and large, understands that our intrusiveness is well justified by the benefits that the CWC brings in terms of peace, security and better conditions for a prosperous commercial activity. In that sense, I firmly believe that there is a need for OPCW to continue refining and expanding verification efforts in the category of “other chemical production facilities” - OCPFs - since the number of facilities declared under this category is very large, the percentage of inspections is relatively low and unfairly distributed among Member States and many OCPFs have the ability to quickly reconvert for the production of chemicals scheduled in the Convention.

In the context of OPCW’s international cooperation activities, I would like to mention, for the record, our programmes that aim to build the capacities of our member States to promote the peaceful application of chemistry and the pursuit of legitimate industry-related activities.

I am particularly conscious and supportive of the aspirations of the majority of our member States in this important area.

We have a number of programme areas designed to benefit our States parties. They include courses to develop analytical skills, support for research projects and placement of interns in various institutions around the world.

One of our most sought-after training opportunities is called the Associate Programme. It has been successfully held several times, and the eighth edition is currently under way.

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The programme is designed to provide chemists and chemical engineers from OPCW member States whose economies are either developing or in transition with greater understanding of the CWC, focusing on promotion of the peaceful uses of chemistry.

It facilitates industry-related national implementation of the Convention and seeks to enhance national capacities in the peaceful uses of chemistry through improvements in the skills of qualified chemists and chemical engineers.

During the 10-week curriculum, they acquire a wider understanding of advanced industrial practices with an emphasis on chemical safety.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to a number of States parties for their voluntary contributions to this and other critical activities of OPCW. They include valuable assistance from the European Union, Japan and the United States to support the secretariat's programmes in the areas of national implementation, international cooperation and the promotion of universality.

An outstanding feature of OPCW's progress is the wide adherence that the CWC has attracted in a relatively short timespan. As I mentioned before, membership now stands at 182 States parties, a rather impressive figure in only 10 years. That, however, is not enough.

Not just compliance by all member States but also universal adherence to the Convention is fundamental to the success of the CWC. Any single absence, never mind the size of the country, but particularly if it is one with an active chemical programme or stockpiles, could greatly undermine the achievement of the objectives of the Convention. There can be no reasons to withhold adherence to the Treaty, a Treaty that reflects the united view of humankind about the illegality, the immorality and the growing strategic irrelevance of chemical weapons.

Therefore, universality of the Convention is one key goal of OPCW and the First Review Conference, held in May 2003, adopted an Action Plan to that end. Much advancement has been achieved since then.

There were 40 States not party to the Convention in 2003. Today there remain only 13. We warmly welcome the new accessions and ratifications. By choosing to join the Convention, these new States parties have made a critical contribution to advancing the goals of disarmament and non-proliferation.

We expect more States to join in the near future. Iraq, Lebanon and the Congo have informed us of the steps they have taken to accede to the Convention in the near future. There are also encouraging signs from Angola and Guinea-Bissau. We appreciate their decisions and will extend to these countries all possible assistance to help them to join OPCW.

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for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons)

Of the other 10 countries, we are aware that some - like the Dominican Republic and the Bahamas - fully support the Convention and its objectives but are hindered due to logistical or resource constraints. There are on the other hand those who up to now have not indicated the intention to join us. This is causing understandable concern to States parties and OPCW.

Some of the reluctant States, I must say, are members of this Conference and support declarations identifying the disarmament ideals of comprehensiveness, non-discrimination and effective verification. Yet, they choose not to join the CWC, which is founded on the basis of these very principles. I hope those States will seriously reconsider their positions.

The lack of support for the Convention in the Middle East represents a serious void in our map where Egypt, Israel and Syria continue to cite regional security concerns for not joining the Convention. As Director-General of OPCW, I find myself unable to agree with these arguments, which, despite the conviction in their articulation, have the practical effect of retaining open the chemical option in the region and of depriving the long-suffering peoples of the Middle East of the benefits of the CWC.

At the same time, I do value their presence as observers at our Conference of States parties as well as the disposition to holding a friendly and frank dialogue with OPCW, as shown by Egypt and Israel, both during my visits to those countries and in the exchanges held with their envoys at our headquarters in The Hague. To conclude with reference to the Middle East, I would like to record my hope that the question of accession to the CWC will be borne in mind in the course of the ongoing reactivation of the Middle East Quartet.

A situation of concern exists also in North-East Asia, where the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is still not a State party and has so far declined any contact with OPCW. I trust that the progress recently achieved in implementing the United Nations Security Council resolutions about the DPRK's nuclear weapons programme will open the door for addressing the chemical issue. After all, Security Council resolution 1718 also refers to other categories of weapons of mass destruction. On our part, we remain ready and willing to support accession to the Convention by the DPRK if its Government so decides.

The only other State not party in Asia, Myanmar, is an original signatory to the Convention but has not yet taken the steps since then to ratify. Our dialogue with Myanmar has been going on for several years now, and we trust that the time is really nearing when that country will ratify the Treaty.

In short, I would once again appeal to all the remaining non-parties to seriously consider joining the Convention at an early date. Taking this step will advance the cause of peace and security in both the Middle East and North-East Asia.

In the first formative decade of OPCW's life, we have made sustained progress in implementing the Convention and the programme priorities established by our member States, through this very CD. This is reflected in the progressive establishment of an effectively functioning and credible regime both to verify the destruction of chemical weapons and to

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prevent their proliferation, which is also reflected in the successful promotion, through a flexible and adaptable verification regime and a gradual incremental approach to industry inspections, of cooperative relations between the Technical Secretariat and States parties and among States parties themselves, in conjunction with a high degree of intrusiveness. We have also seen it in our preparedness for exigencies that would require the coordination of assistance and protection if ever a member State were to suffer an attack or the threat of an attack with chemical weapons. And finally, it is reflected in promoting international cooperation in the peaceful uses of chemistry and assisting in national implementation of the Convention, and in advancing universal adherence to the Convention.

The multilateral character of the Convention and the non-discriminatory application of its provisions to all States parties are the main pillars of our strength. All States parties are equal under the rules of the Convention.

Our member States have also shown remarkable good will and dedication in building a strong and vibrant multilateral organization. They have done so when acting through the policy-making organs and also when fully utilizing the opportunities OPCW offers as a forum for consultations and cooperation for resolving issues and providing guidance for better implementation of the Convention and its goals. In this way, we have made an invaluable contribution not just to the practical functioning of OPCW, but to the overall confidence-building process that is indispensable for the eventual success of the Convention.

The sustained dedication of our States parties to the success of our multilateral endeavour and the two action plans on promoting universality and on national implementation are just a few examples of this commitment.

Thus, almost invariably, key players in OPCW have been prepared to go the extra mile necessary to ensure consensus around the decisions of the policy-making organs. An exemplary spirit of dialogue and a continuous search for balance are everyday notes at OPCW. There is an implicit recognition that in the field of chemical weapons, attending to the common interest is a good way of serving the national interest.

In addition, those States parties in a position to do so have provided supplementary voluntary contributions in support of the two action plans and other programmes of OPCW. The financial assistance provided by the EU and its Joint Action with OPCW, now for the third time, has been particularly valuable in advancing the objectives of universality and national implementation. I commend the European Union for its consistent support to OPCW in pursuance of its strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Furthermore, it has been a common practice of the Organisation to relate with relevant sectors of civil society. We appreciate and pay close attention to the work of scientists and academia and provide for occasions to interact with them, such as the Academic Forum that will take place in The Hague next month.

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Member States have also engaged with each other in an exemplary manner in seeking to resolve matters between them. I would like to mention in particular the ongoing cooperation between China and Japan to ensure the disposal of chemical weapons abandoned on Chinese territory.

In short, whatever achievements OPCW is capable of showing are not the result of an accident but of the fruitful conclusion of the united efforts of all States parties, towards the same goal.

During the tenth anniversary year, which is the very reason why I am here, I have been repeatedly reminded of the strong dedication of our States parties to the goals of the CWC and to its successful implementation. Congratulatory messages have poured in from around the world reaffirming our States parties' conviction of the contribution of the Convention to advance the cause of peace, security and a humane world.

Scores of commemorative events have been organized in every region and more are to follow. The highlight of this special year was the unveiling on 9 May by Her Majesty Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands of a monument dedicated to all victims of chemical weapons. Her Majesty's presence at OPCW was symbolic of the strong support the Netherlands provides to OPCW as the host country. The Hague and its administration have also gone out of their way to ensure the most favourable and hospitable environment for the OPCW headquarters and its staff.

The general spirit of collaboration and collegiality shown by our States parties portends a positive outlook for the future of our work. However, I must also underline the fact that these prospects will be impacted by how well we are able to deal with the challenges in the near and long term.

For one, the question of meeting the final deadlines for the complete destruction of chemical weapons by the major possessor States will continue to engage attention and it is vital that these deadlines - 29 April 2012 at the latest - be respected.

Secondly, the proliferation of chemical weapons will continue to remain an issue requiring continued long-term attention. The looming threat of chemical terrorism reinforces such necessity. In that context, as I said before, I remain convinced of the need to strengthen verification in connection with "other chemical production facilities". Equally, I have mentioned the concern of States parties in connection with physical security issues.

And finally, OPCW will in the coming years face important decisions in order for the Convention to respond to the inexorable march of science and technology and the fast-evolving developments in the field of chemistry and production technology. Such decisions would be crucial to ensure that the Convention's hard-earned prohibitions remain relevant for all times to come. Once existing arsenals are eliminated, States parties need to ensure that the Convention continues to remain an effective tool against proliferation, having due regard also to new scientific and technological developments.

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States parties will have an opportunity to initiate reflection and deliberations on these and other important matters when they meet next year in April for the Second Review Conference of the Convention, for which preparations are already under way through an Open-ended Working Group, ably chaired by Ambassador Lynn Parker, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to OPCW. I trust that, while showing the way ahead, the Second Review Conference will be guided by a common desire to preserve and strengthen OPCW.

I would like to conclude my statement by hoping that in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, while no two issues may be alike, the CWC and the progress achieved by OPCW may offer some useful elements to inform other disarmament-related topics.

Perhaps not the least significant of them is the evidence that, with adequate political support, multilateralism can indeed work as an effective tool for dealing with the disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in a way that can satisfy the interests of both individual nations and the international community as a whole.

Finally, together with reiterating my appreciation for the opportunity to address this important body, I would express the hope that the experience of OPCW, although unique and not necessarily a recipe for other agreements, can contribute in one way or another to your own work, which includes important disarmament issues.

After all, the CWC is a proud product of this very Conference and there should be no reason why, when addressing pending matters, the Conference on Disarmament cannot once again prove its necessity and importance in advancing disarmament and non-proliferation goals that are inseparable from and indispensable to the promotion of global peace and security.

Thank you for having been very patient.

I wish the Conference on Disarmament every success.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in French): I thank Ambassador Pfirter for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair and to my country. Ambassador Pfirter has highlighted the importance of the work of his Organization, but also the importance of the work of the Conference on Disarmament when it is engaged in negotiations. Consequently, all of us in this room have an enormous responsibility to shoulder in terms of resuming negotiations here as soon as possible. Having said that, I now give the floor to Ambassador Johannes Landman, who will speak on behalf of his own country and Poland.

Mr. LANDMAN (Netherlands) (spoke in French): Mr. President, I have the honour to speak also on behalf of my colleague, the Ambassador of Poland, Mr. Rapacki.

The delegations of Poland and the Netherlands welcome the visit and the address of the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Ambassador Pfirter, at the Conference on Disarmament. A number of events commemorating

(Mr. Landman, Netherlands)

the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction and of the establishment of OPCW, which are taking place in Geneva today, are a visible example of the continuing interest and support of the Geneva community for multilateralism, disarmament and non-proliferation; it was here in Geneva, in this body in fact, as the Director-General so eloquently recorded himself in his rich intervention just before me, that the Convention was brought about.

(spoke in English)

The anniversary of the Convention has important symbolic value both as a milestone in itself and as a catalyst for further efforts to consolidate the goals of the first global multilateral, non-discriminatory disarmament treaty - a unique instrument for non-proliferation and verifiable arms control that offers a credible and effective response to the threat posed by chemical weapons. What really lies at the heart of it is the confirmation of the commitment to the multilateral treaty system and to the purpose and object of the Convention.

In this context, I have the honour, also on behalf of Ambassador Rapacki of the Republic of Poland, to inform all member States to the Conference on Disarmament that - following the request of the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons - the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland and of the Kingdom of the Netherlands will jointly host a high-level meeting on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

This high-level meeting will be held in the margins of the sixty-second session of the United Nations General Assembly and will take place on 27 September in New York. It is, like all tenth anniversary events, organized outside OPCW and United Nations policy-making organs. The high-level meeting is a commemorative event open to participation by all United Nations Members as well as other relevant international and non-governmental organizations. It will be concluded with a statement agreed prior to the meeting.

The high-level meeting will be fully devoted to express commitment to multilateralism and to the objectives and purpose of the CWC. It will support the promotion of the universality of the Convention and its full and effective implementation. The meeting will highlight the success story of OPCW as an example of effective multilateralism. It will also assist in building synergies and strengthen collaboration between the United Nations, its organs and other international organizations in meeting the challenges of proliferation and terrorism.

Many States have already welcomed the proposal by Poland and the Netherlands to convene such a high-level meeting on the tenth anniversary of the CWC. The consultations with all interested States will be continued in capitals and in New York, where a draft statement of the high-level meeting will be presented for consideration and final arrangements concerning the meeting will be made. Informal consultations were held on 15 June at OPCW and in New York on 1 August. Full support for the meeting was given by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs.

(Mr. Landman, Netherlands)

The Republic of Poland and the Kingdom of the Netherlands urge all United Nations Members to join preparations and attend the high-level meeting at ministerial level. Formal invitations are being sent out.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in French): I thank the distinguished representative of the Netherlands for his contribution.

Are there any other delegations wishing to speak on the subject of the Chemical Weapons Convention?

None do. So we will now start the debate on biological weapons. The next speaker is Ambassador Masood Khan, who will be speaking in his capacity as President of the Sixth Conference to Review the Convention on Biological Weapons and Chairman of the meetings organized in 2007 under the same Convention.

Ambassador Masood Khan, who is well known among us, has already had a very lengthy and productive career - in postings both in Islamabad and abroad - during which he acquired specialized knowledge of various aspects of his country's foreign policy, particularly multilateral diplomacy, security and disarmament issues, human rights and social development. After having steered the work of the Conference to Review the Biological Weapons Convention in 2006, Ambassador Khan will also chair the meetings organized in 2007 under the Convention.

Mr. KHAN (President of the Sixth Review Conference and Chairman of the 2007 meetings of the Biological Weapons Convention): Thank you, Mr. President, for the generous introduction, and thank you for inviting me to address the Conference on Disarmament on the Biological Weapons Convention.

It was a privilege to listen to Ambassador Rogelio Pfirter, Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, as our guest in this chamber. He joined us today to celebrate the 10 years of operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, one of the most important and successful products of this Conference. Ambassador Pfirter's remarks are an important reminder of what we can achieve in the area of multilateral arms control and disarmament.

The BWC, which entered into force a little over 30 years ago in 1975, was also a product of this Conference, albeit in an earlier incarnation. There were once plans to tackle chemical and biological disarmament together, in a single instrument. For various reasons, that course was abandoned, and instead the international community's approach to stopping chemical and biological weapons has followed different courses.

The BWC is a simple instrument, only a few pages long. Its prohibitions are clear, succinct, categorical and definitive, but it is an instrument of principle rather than procedure. It contains no provision for the monitoring or verification of compliance, no provision for an implementing organization, no details of how alleged breaches should be investigated, no organized means of helping States parties meet their obligations. Many considered this a serious

(Mr. Khan, President of the Sixth Review Conference
and Chairman of the 2007 meetings of the Biological
Weapons Convention)

shortcoming. For much of the history of the BWC, States parties and others have fretted about the effectiveness of the treaty as a practical barrier against the development of biological weapons.

In 2001, when the Fifth Review Conference foundered on sharp differences as to a proposal to conclude a protocol to verify the BWC regime, it seemed possible that the multilateral efforts against biological weapons could come to a halt. Yet this did not happen. Thanks to the resourcefulness and determination of the States parties, the BWC has embarked on a new course, but one that is arguably better suited to the unique challenges posed by biological weapons in today's world.

First came a period of damage control and resuscitation. At the resumed session of the Fifth Review Conference in 2002, States parties succeeded in putting their differences to one side in order to establish a work programme for 2003 to 2005, at which they would work on several specific topics related to better implementation of the Convention. There would be no attempt to negotiate or agree on binding measures, or even recommendations. Expectations were correspondingly low. And yet, to the surprise of many, the process was a success. Experts from all around the world gathered to share experiences and ideas on how to deal with the threat posed by biological weapons. Officials from health, science and agriculture ministries made connections with their counterparts in defence, justice, foreign affairs and security agencies. In the period after the terrorist atrocities of September 2001, there was great interest in cooperating against the possibility of bioterrorism, and this gave a further boost to the project.

Just as importantly, the expert meetings provided an opportunity for the world's scientific community and medical professionals to become directly engaged in developing a response to a threat that, in a sense, had become too widespread and all-pervasive for governments to tackle alone. The extraordinary advances achieved in biosciences meant that biological weapons were - in theory - within reach of the smallest laboratory and most modest budget. No government, no international organization, could hope to monitor effectively the tens of thousands of small biotechnology facilities in operation worldwide. Clearly, this was a problem that needed a collective, multifaceted and multidimensional approach. The work programme of 2003 to 2005 showed that such an approach could work, and started to develop the necessary network of collaboration and coordination: a network that must weave international, regional and domestic strands into a flexible and resilient fabric of oversight and prevention.

The Sixth Review Conference in 2006, over which I presided, built on the good results of the intersessional process and the confidence it had engendered among States parties. Our goal was to transcend the divisions of the past and settle the BWC on its new course. This was a challenge, certainly, but one to which the States parties were ready to rise. The constructive, practical and realistic manner in which all States parties approached their preparations for the Conference, while maintaining their long-standing goals and positions of principle, was a testimony to their wisdom, and proof of the great potential of multilateral diplomacy. It was a difficult Conference, but ultimately a successful one. I would like to thank sincerely all those who contributed to the result, including many of my colleagues sitting here today.

(Mr. Khan, President of the Sixth Review Conference and Chairman of the 2007 meetings of the Biological Weapons Convention)

The Review Conference agreed on a Final Declaration embodying a common vision for the Convention and its implementation, ending a 10-year gap and resolving many of the issues that had so divided States parties. This in itself was a fundamental step forward that will open the way for improved collective action against the threat of biological weapons. The Conference also agreed on many practical measures, including: a detailed new intersessional work programme to help ensure effective implementation of the Convention until the Seventh Review Conference in 2011; specific measures to obtain universal adherence to the Convention; an update of the mechanism for confidence-building measures, foreshadowing a more thorough review in 2011; requiring States parties to nominate a national point of contact to better coordinate various aspects of national implementation and universalization; and finally, various measures to improve national implementation, including article X of the Convention dealing with the peaceful uses of biological science and technology.

Perhaps more significantly, the Conference decided to establish an Implementation Support Unit for the Convention, addressing a long-standing need for institutional support for the efforts of States parties in implementing the Convention itself and the decisions of the review conferences. The Implementation Support Unit is now operational and is busy preparing for the 2007 Meeting of Experts, which will be held here in Geneva from 20 to 24 August.

On the opening day of that meeting, it will be my honour to host, with the Director-General of UNOG, Mr. Ordzhonikidze, an event to formally launch the Unit, to which all delegations are most cordially invited. We have also invited the United Nations Secretary-General's High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Sergio Duarte, to join us on this symbolic occasion.

Implementation of the other decisions of the Review Conference is also well under way. The decision to undertake coordinated action to encourage non-members to join the Convention is already bearing fruit, with three States - Kazakhstan, Montenegro and Trinidad and Tobago - having joined since the Conference concluded. This has increased the number of States parties from 155 to 158. The new system for secure electronic distribution of the confidence-building measures is already operational, and the measures submitted so far in 2007 are now available on this system. Many States parties have already nominated their national contact points, and are in regular contact with the Implementation Support Unit.

The Meeting of Experts marks the formal commencement of the new intersessional work programme. Many States parties have been preparing for this meeting, which will address the following two topics: ways and means to enhance national implementation, including enforcement of national legislation, strengthening of national institutions and coordination among national law enforcement institutions; and regional and subregional cooperation on implementation of the Convention.

We will be working closely with Interpol and relevant regional organizations to improve the operation of national legislation and regulations, and enhance coordination among national law enforcement institutions.

(Mr. Khan, President of the Sixth Review Conference and Chairman of the 2007 meetings of the Biological Weapons Convention)

Next year, our work will turn to the important topics of biosafety and biosecurity, and education and awareness-raising. This will be an important opportunity to engage once again with the scientific, medical and educational communities and continue to develop a coordinated, interlinked approach to the prevention of the misuse of biological science and technology. In subsequent years, we will deal with international cooperation and assistance for combating infectious disease, and for responding to cases of alleged use of biological weapons. Again, work in these areas will require integration and coordination with other agencies and activities, illustrating once more that our task is a shared one.

I am pleased to report that, thanks to the creative and constructive efforts of the States parties, the BWC is in good shape and ready to confront the challenges it faces. The outcome of the Sixth Review Conference has given us a solid basis for our efforts. We can take some satisfaction from the result, especially in the light of the difficulties and divisions we have experienced in the past. But much remains to be done: the success of the Conference is a means to an end, not an end in itself. All States parties need to continue to work hard to turn words into action, to overcome their remaining differences, and to convert their shared vision into reality. Provided they do so, I am confident that the Biological Weapons Convention will make a genuine and significant contribution to reducing the risks of biological weapons being developed or used by any actor, anywhere in the world.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in French): I thank Ambassador Masood Khan for his statement and wish him as much success for his term in the Chair in 2007 as in 2006. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Kazakhstan, Ambassador Kairat Abusseitov.

Mr. ABUSSEITOV (Kazakhstan): Mr. President, since I am taking the floor for the first time under your chairmanship, let me congratulate you on the assumption of the CD presidency and assure you of our fullest support and cooperation.

It is my understanding that this is a good opportunity to inform the members of the Conference that the accession of Kazakhstan to the Biological Weapons Convention on 28 June this year is a logical and consistent implication of our national policy in the field of WMD disarmament and non-proliferation.

Our accession to the BWC is in line with the efforts of its parties to make the membership of the Convention universal. Together with other members we will work towards the total universalization of the ban on biological weapons. We expect that the participation of Kazakhstan's experts and scientists in BWC activities will facilitate cooperation in the field of peaceful use of relevant technologies and know-how.

Let me also inform you that accession to the BWC is a part of another process aimed at joining the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). The preparatory work started in 1996. Since then all necessary legal norms and regulations in the field of export control have been adopted. While not formally accepted by the MTCR, Kazakhstan strictly follows its principles. Official application for membership in the MTCR was submitted on 10 June 2003.

(Mr. Abusseitov, Kazakhstan)

Our aspiration to join the MTCR is driven by the need to develop the potential of the Baikonur space launch site, to ensure access to the space services market and newest space technologies.

We hope that the delegations representing countries members of the MTCR will deliver these considerations to their capitals.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in French): I thank the Ambassador of Kazakhstan for his statement and his kind words addressed to the Chair. I congratulate his country on having ratified the Convention on Biological Weapons.

Does any delegation wish to take the floor on biological weapons?

I give the floor to the distinguished representative of Italy, Ambassador Trezza.

Mr. TREZZA (Italy): Mr. President, since this is the first time I am taking the floor in a plenary meeting under your presidency, I wish to congratulate you first of all on your presidency and assure you of my full support and the support of my delegation.

I would like to make some remarks of a general nature concerning both the issues of chemical and biological weapons. This is not a prepared statement, so I hope you will bear with me if it is not as perfectly delivered as previous speakers'.

First of all, I believe that indeed the tenth anniversary of the Chemical Weapons Convention deserves to be celebrated in Geneva. And the same goes for the significant results in the field of biological weapons, which were presented by Ambassador Khan.

During the ceremony which preceded this meeting, I believe Ambassador Pfirter mentioned the image of chemical weapons coming back like a baby to its mother, the CD. I sometimes wonder who is the mother and who is the baby, in view of the results which have been achieved in the past years. Indeed, I think the CD should be proud of its past record of which I believe the Chemical Weapons Convention as well as the Biological Weapons Convention are among the most significant results, although we should not ignore the NPT and the CTBT and other significant achievements of this Conference. But looking to the past is not sufficient. We of course also have to look to the future.

Indeed, both in the case of chemical weapons and in the case of biological weapons we can speak about a success story. In both cases, there was a total prohibition of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction, and this is no small achievement indeed.

When we talk about the Chemical Weapons Convention - and there was a very complete and exhaustive presentation by Ambassador Pfirter - one has to realize how far this Convention went not only in a total prohibition through a legally binding treaty but also through the establishment of a fully fledged organization, a review process, a sophisticated verification system, provisions for national legislation. All this makes the Chemical Weapons Convention, I

(Mr. Trezza, Italy)

believe, one of the most advanced instruments in the field of disarmament and weapons of mass destruction. I believe from his presentation some lessons can be drawn, even for our future deliberations here. For instance, the interesting debate on how flexible one should be in establishing deadlines for the main provision of a convention. Is it not convenient to be rather flexible and make sure that every State is comfortable with the deadlines, for instance in the destruction or elimination of weapons that is foreseen? The question of feasibility of verification of modalities of on-site inspections: the remark was made that inspections are not the only means of verification. And then I note that an issue that we are debating here - so-called "security assurances", both positive and negative - are an issue which does not only regard nuclear weapons but also chemical weapons. The use of these weapons by terrorists - resolution 1540 - and also the very large issue of assistance to countries in eliminating these weapons, of which the G-8 Global Partnership Programme is one of the most significant expressions. Here, as a member of the European Union, I wish to thank Ambassador Pfirter for mentioning the role of the EU both in the fields of assistance and cooperation in the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Now, passing to biological weapons, I really appreciated very much, as I said, the presentation of Ambassador Khan, who said that the Biological Weapons Convention is indeed a simpler instrument but which establishes the stronger principle of a total prohibition. We all know that the instruments are not as sophisticated as the ones foreseen by the Chemical Weapons Convention, and we indeed appreciate the kind of resuscitation of this Convention which has taken place in past years and to hear Ambassador Khan say that the Biological Weapons Convention is now in good shape.

But can we say the same thing about the Conference on Disarmament? Is the CD in good shape, the CD which is supposed to be the mother of all disarmament conventions?

I think that throughout the discussion this morning, we have not mentioned the third pillar of weapons-of-mass-destruction disarmament, which is the nuclear pillar. Our view is that the nuclear issue is a kind of different animal, if you compare it with the other weapons of mass destruction. The international community has followed a different path when it comes to nuclear weapons - not a single treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons, but a step-by-step process of which, for those who are party to the NPT, the so-called 13 Practical Steps of the year 2000 Review Conference are an indication. Even in the CD itself I would say that nuclear disarmament is the prime concern, if we think that three of the four so-called core issues which have been foreseen by the six Presidents for the programme of this year are issues related to the nuclear field.

So, to conclude, we believe that there is a positive record in the Conference on Disarmament, especially in prohibiting two of the three categories of weapons of mass destruction. The unfinished business is in the nuclear field, and we believe that this is at least one of the most important challenges ahead.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in French): I thank Ambassador Trezza for his contribution and his kind words addressed to the Chair.

(The President)

Does any other delegation wish to take the floor?

I give the floor to the representative of Iran.

Mr. SAJJADPOUR (Islamic Republic of Iran): I really appreciate the interesting meeting we have had today and the remarks of the distinguished Director-General of OPCW.

I just want to announce that Iran is organizing a conference on the tenth anniversary of that Convention coming into force, in Teheran on 22 and 23 October, to discuss different dimensions of the Convention. A visit to the city of Sardasht is also being organized for the conference participants. As you know, Sardasht is the Iranian city in the Kurdish area of Iran where chemical weapons were used by the Iraqi Baathist regime, and we still have victims dying every month and day. Iran, as a very active member of all the negotiations in this room on the Chemical Weapons Convention and as a victim of these weapons, is very attentive to the Convention and its implementation, and this conference is just for the tenth anniversary as a token that it needs international attention more and more.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in French): I thank the distinguished delegate of Iran for his contribution.

Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? None does. Now I would like to invite the Conference to take a decision on the additional request to participate in our work presented by a non-member State of the Conference. This request appears in document CD/WP.544/Add.6 and comes from the Republic of Montenegro.

We have learned today that the Republic of Montenegro has also become a party to the Convention on Biological Weapons.

May I take it that the Conference decides to invite the Republic of Montenegro to participate in our work as an observer, in keeping with our rules of procedure?

I give the floor to the distinguished representative of Canada.

Mr. MEYER (Canada): Mr. President, just to note on the application regarding observer status for the Republic of Montenegro and their note, we have no problem with their coming into the Conference and that status, but I would repeat, as I have earlier, that I think it is important that the secretariat clarify exactly who will be representing them from their delegation here on CD-related matters, and if that information could be provided subsequently.

The PRESIDENT: The secretariat will inform you in due time.

Can we take the decision now on the request of Montenegro?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (spoke in French): So our work is completed for today. Does any delegation wish to take the floor?

None does.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will take place on Thursday, 16 August 2007, at 10 a.m. in this room.

Before adjourning the meeting, I would like to remind you that the seminar organized by the Office for Disarmament Affairs, OPCW, Pugwash and UNIDIR will take place this afternoon at 3.30 p.m., here in the Council chamber.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.