

**COMMEMORATION CEREMONY TO MARK
THE DAY OF REMEMBRANCE FOR ALL
VICTIMS OF CHEMICAL WARFARE 2013
Speaking Notes for H.E. Mr Peter Goosen
Chairman of the Conference of States Parties
29 April 2013**

Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I welcome you to this commemoration ceremony. We have dedicated this day as the Day of Remembrance for all victims of chemical weapons.

I thank you all for your presence and wish to recognize in particular Mr Karel van Ossterom, Director-General of Political Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and Mr Jozias van Aartsen, Mayor of The Hague who have joined us today.

Both the host government and the municipality of The Hague continue to provide strong support to the OPCW's mission.

The Day of Remembrance has come to occupy an important position in the calendar of activities of the Organisation. It is a poignant reminder of the suffering inflicted by chemical weapons. It is an occasion to pay tribute to the memory of those whose deaths were heart rending. The plight of survivors of chemical attacks has been no less tragic.

Today also marks the 16th anniversary of the operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Its effective implementation and the progress made towards achieving its goals is the best tribute that can be offered to the victims of chemical warfare. Thanks to the devotion of our States Parties and the spirit of cooperation and consensus, the OPCW is now widely recognised as a model for multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation. The recent success of the Third Review Conference has reinforced this view.

By working steadily towards realising the objectives of the Convention, we pay homage to the memory of countless victims across the world that suffered the cruelty of chemical weapons.

Our presence here today represents more than a commemoration. It is an occasion to reaffirm our commitment to the aims of the CWC. Such a resolve will ensure that chemical weapons are never used again.

The Convention represents a noble humanitarian undertaking. It has brought nations together in pursuit of common aspirations towards a more peaceful and secure world.

An effective global ban covering an entire category of weapons of mass destruction is indeed a major achievement of the international community. Today in respectful memory of all victims of chemical warfare, let us rededicate ourselves to the goal of a chemical weapons free world.