



**ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION
OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS**

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ADDRESS BY
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ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF
CHEMICAL WEAPONS
AT THE CLOSING SESSION OF
THE ASSOCIATE PROGRAMME 2011

OPCW
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Excellencies, distinguished guests, participants in the Associate Programme, colleagues and friends,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to this ceremony marking the successful conclusion of the 12th edition of the OPCW Associate Programme.

I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate you on completing this very diverse and intensive programme which is the flagship programme of the organisation.

This is the 12th edition of the very successful programme. To date, since its inception in the year 2000, the programme has trained and supported 265 participants from 96 developing countries and economies in transition. I am glad to notice that among the participants this year, for the first time, there is representation from Democratic Republic of Congo, Paraguay, Samoa and Ukraine. I have also instructed that additional efforts be made to encourage and include the Member States who have not been represented to date. I would urge those Member States to nominate suitable candidates to benefit from the programme. The participants in this programme are drawn from industry, academic institutions and government agencies and the feedback received from the former participants has generally indicated that most of them are in touch with their National Authorities and are assisting in the implementation of the Convention. Some are also taking active steps to disseminate the knowledge gained from the course through their respective work environments. Since many of you have come from the academia, I

believe the knowledge gained in this programme will also be shared with your students and colleagues.

The programme has made a significant contribution to the Convention's objectives as they relate to the economic and technological development of Member States. It has also facilitated capacity-building by imparting to qualified chemists and chemical engineers, the skills and exposure required to operate effectively and safely in a modern chemical industry environment. Moreover, the programme has facilitated the implementation of the industry-related provisions of the Convention and broadens the talent pool of those shouldering responsibilities in the National Authorities and other relevant institutions.

The Chemical Weapons Convention is a multi-faceted disarmament treaty. It deals with aspects relating to the destruction of chemical weapons and chemical weapons production facilities, and with non-proliferation through verification of the industry. It addresses the need for assistance and protection against the use or threat of use of chemical weapons. Furthermore, it focuses on international cooperation in the field of peaceful use of chemistry and chemical technology. The Associate Programme not only underscores the benefits of joining the Convention, but it also contributes towards fulfilling the goals of the Convention.

The Associate programme is unique because it is based on the concept of Integrated Chemicals Management, combining both the theoretical and practical training that we provide. It covers not only the various aspects of the Convention and the activities of the OPCW, but it also provides skills development in chemistry and chemical engineering in relevant areas. Academic training, hands-on industrial exposure at modern

chemical plants, visits to specialised institutions, work on research projects, role plays, and group discussions are important facets of the training. The programme is spread over a nine-week period, and is indeed one of the most intensive and demanding activities organised by the OPCW in the area of international cooperation.

An endeavour of such nature and extent could not be successful without the strong support of our Member States. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands for consistently supporting the Associate Programme since its inception. The Programme also received generous support from Member States, such as the voluntary contribution from the Governments of Japan and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. This year again, a representative from the German National Authority provided participants with valuable information pertaining to Germany's implementation of the Convention.

In addition, The Netherlands, Denmark, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Poland and Spain have extended their continuous support by identifying placements in their chemical industry for the participants. I wish to sincerely express my gratitude to them as well as to the Czech Republic, Malaysia, Portugal and Saudi Arabia who have come, for the first time, with training opportunities for the Associates in their chemical industries.

My sincere thanks go also to the industries themselves who have, as part of their 'responsible care' and corporate social responsibility policy, accepted participants for the three weeks of industrial attachments, namely: "Enaspol" (Czech Republic), "Danisco" (Denmark), "BASF" (Germany), "CCM Chemicals" and "Optimal Chemicals" (Malaysia),

“Mitsui Chemicals” and “Mitsubishi Gas Chemicals” (Japan), “Lamberti” and “Zschimmer and Schwarz Italiana” (Italy), “Azoty Tarnow” and “Zachem” (Poland), “CUF Quimicos Industriais” (Portugal), “Heubach Colour” (India), “Sabic” (Saudi Arabia/The Netherlands) and “BASF Espanola” (Spain). I would like to express my deep appreciation to the Permanent Representations, National Authorities, and the national chemical industry associations of the respective Member States for their cooperation in linking up the various components of the programme. In the same context, I am grateful to the chemical companies of Croatia, Italy, The Netherlands and Singapore who have expressed willingness to offer industry attachments during the 2012 edition of the Programme. While thanking those companies as well as those Member States, I would like to take this opportunity to encourage others to come forward with similar offers.

I would like to acknowledge the strong support provided by the European Chemical Industry Council (CEFIC) under their “Responsible Care” activities. Their involvement with the programme since its inception has assisted the Technical Secretariat in generating a favourable response from the chemical industry. Similarly, invaluable support has been provided by other institutions such as the World Customs Organisation, the European Chemicals Agency, the European Chemical Industry Council, the European Association of Chemical Distributors, the city of Rotterdam including its investment agency and the Delft University of Technology (TU Delft).

As industry is a major partner in the implementation of the Convention, I am also happy to note that, this year again; a special session was

organized on the European Union initiative on the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals, known as REACH.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As part of the continuous endeavour of the Technical Secretariat to improve the Associate Programme, a new feature in relation to the media coverage of the Programme was introduced this year. In fact, in addition to the usual media tools the 2011 Associate Programme was earmarked for launching, for the first time, of an interactive blog that allowed participants to interact in real time with regard to their participation to the Programme as well as to the Programme itself. This is a source of satisfaction for us, as this blog not only serves as a forum which generated creative ideas but also provided us with instantaneous feedback about the various activities of the Programme.

In addition to the blog, a social networking page was set up on facebook for the 2011 Associate Programme on a spontaneous initiative by the participants. This also proved to be a valuable addition which allowed you to share your experiences and photographs during the course of the programme. It offers you a supplementary means of communication to keep in touch with each other and with us, and on the other hand, would further promote the Programme itself and, more generally, the work of the Organisation. I hope that many of you will continue to share your experiences with your colleagues through the social media.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Associate Programme took place this year in a very special context, which is the International Year of Chemistry (IYC). This event is a worldwide celebration of the achievements of chemistry and its contributions to the well-being of humankind. As a major contribution to the activities marking the IYC, The OPCW organised earlier this month a very successful Conference on International Cooperation and Chemical Safety and Security. As you were away on those days, I hope you had a chance to follow it and would continue to propagate it, specially the idea of safe and secure application of chemistry for peaceful purposes.

This Conference contributed to the promotion of the goals of the CWC by highlighting both the achievements of OPCW and the challenges that lie ahead. It provided a forum which helped exploring sustainable ways and means of sharing knowledge and best practices to protect chemical plants from potential security threats. Organised together with the major stakeholders of the OPCW like The United Nations, State Parties to the Convention, regional and international organisations, the chemical industry, the IUPAC, NGOs, academic institutions and think tanks, we are currently undertaking the follow up of the fruitful outcome of this Conference.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conclusion, I would like to express my warmest congratulations to you, the Associates, who have made this programme such a great success. Despite the hectic schedule, and the heavy course work, you have more

than fulfilled our expectations. Your commitment, willingness to learn and teamwork have been very impressive.

Your group represents a unique mix of scientists, chemical engineers, and technological specialists primarily engaged in science and technology. Many of you did not have prior knowledge of the Convention. You are now knowledgeable about the Convention's obligations. I will encourage you to contribute in your home countries its effective implementation. We remain confident that you will extend your valuable support in this regard to your National Authorities and government. The Technical Secretariat stands ready to assist each and every one of you in this endeavour and would very much want you to remain connected with the Technical Secretariat using the new social networking facilities.

Upon your return to your respective countries, your knowledge can be of great value towards the fulfilment of the Convention-related obligations. I am also confident that your exposure during the training to modern and state of the art chemical industry practices, a central theme of this programme, will enable you to also contribute to the goals of economic and technological development in your countries.

I wish you every success.

Thank you.