

H.E. Mr Abdullah Gül, President of the Republic of Turkey,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a unique and singular honour for me to welcome H.E. Mr Abdullah Gül, the President of the Republic of Turkey to the OPCW. We highly appreciate that he took the time out of his busy schedule of a State visit to the Netherlands to be with us today. This demonstrates his country's strong commitment to the Chemical Weapons Convention which is a source of great encouragement for our work.

The President is no stranger to the imperatives of multilateral cooperation for promoting peace in the world. Before assuming the high office of the President of Turkey in 2007, he had a decade in the European Council Parliamentary Assembly and served for over four years as Foreign Minister. I had the honour to work for him during this time. Drawing upon both the historically strong relationships and institutional cooperation forged in modernity, he has made a major contribution to profile the Turkish foreign policy. Today it has a global outlook as well as a focus on building peace, security and stability in the Middle East and neighbouring areas.

The Chemical Weapons Convention, the first treaty to ban an entire category of weapons of mass destruction sets an example of what can be accomplished through multilateralism. Our work represents a practical manifestation of the principles and purposes of the United Nations

Charter. The unwavering commitment to make the Convention succeed has blessed our endeavours with success.

Around three quarters of the declared stockpiles of chemical weapons have been destroyed under verification by the OPCW. The Organisation works with States Parties and the global chemical industry as well as the scientific community to build confidence that chemistry is used for peaceful purposes alone. Many produced chemicals could be extremely dangerous in unscrupulous hands.

Much has been accomplished in the areas of international cooperation and assistance and protection against chemical weapons. These programmes display the Organisation's unique character of inclusiveness necessary for a multilateral institution fulfilling a global agenda.

But there is no end point to our work. Declared chemical weapons will continue to be destroyed in a progressive manner. Our collective membership has taken a constructive decision to allow possessor States to complete their chemical weapons demilitarisation programmes beyond the final destruction deadline. In return, possessor States have accepted to ensure that the task is completed in the shortest possible time with full transparency and strict reporting requirements.

What we have accomplished through firm commitment and exemplary cooperation, need to be sustained through unrelenting efforts. Convincing those who have not yet committed to join the Convention, to participate in this worthy endeavour remains a key objective for there to be complete confidence that chemical weapons have indeed been eliminated from every country.

The CWC represents a set of obligations that States Parties accept internationally. The true utility of these obligations is realised when these are implemented domestically. We need to continue to promote the effective national implementation of the Convention. Needless to say the comprehensive national legislation and enforcement are the most effective means to address contemporary threats including the possibility of chemical terrorism.

The Organisation needs to begin the process of adaptation to a challenging future even as we attend to the unfinished business of destruction, universality and national implementation. The international community has banned chemical weapons for all times to come. This calls for perpetual vigilance in order to ensure that chemical weapons shall never re-emerge. OPCW verification offers the practical tools towards this end. Continued refinement of our industry verification efforts will be important to ensure that all categories of relevant facilities are adequately covered. Our international cooperation programmes provide an obvious avenue to ensure the needed reservoir of political support for the Convention.

In the coming years the OPCW will also be required to respond to the inexorable march of science and technology and developments in the field of chemistry and production technology. Decisions will be needed to ensure that the Convention's hard earned prohibitions remain relevant for ever.

On the whole, we live in a time of change and a time of challenge. As our motto suggests we shall be "working together for a world free of

chemical weapons”. More than ever before, the Organisation needs support at the highest levels in governments across its membership.

We are therefore extremely grateful to His Excellency, President Abdullah Gül whose presence amongst us today is a source of great encouragement. I thank him once again for his important gesture and express my gratitude to all of you for your kind presence.