



**ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION
OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS**

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*Opening Remarks by Mrs Grace Asirwatham,
Deputy Director-General of the OPCW,
At the Opening Session of the Workshop on Article XI
for the Asia Region*

*Beijing, China
3 September 2012*

H.E. Ma Zhaoxu, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs

Distinguished participants,

Ladies and gentlemen,

1. It gives me great pleasure to participate in the opening of the workshop on Article XI of the Chemical Weapons Convention for the Asia region. I warmly welcome all the participants and also thank our co-host the government of the People's Republic of China for extending their strong support and assistance in holding the workshop here. This is a very significant event for the OPCW as it represents the steady progress being made in the context of implementing Article XI.
2. I would especially like to welcome and thank H.E. Ma Zhaoxu, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs and Mr Li Yang, Deputy Director General of Disarmament for their presence today.
3. This workshop is a follow-up to a similar event on Article XI that was held at the OPCW Headquarters in November 2010. Given the outcomes of that international workshop and a decision on Article XI (C-16/DEC.10) adopted by the Conference of the States Parties at its Sixteenth Session, the Technical Secretariat planned to convene a number of additional Article XI related events to identify and prioritise concrete measures especially relevant to the regions concerned.
4. The honour to host the first such workshop belongs to the Government of the People's Republic of China. As you are all aware China has one of the fastest rates of growth in the chemical

industry sector and would continue to have so in the years to come. Given the size, complexity and prospects of growth in the Asian region it is only natural that the first workshop is being held for the Asian region at Beijing.

5. Over the last five years representatives from China have served as facilitators on Article XI. Their work facilitated last year's adoption of the decision on the "Components of an Agreed Framework for the Full Implementation of Article XI" at the Conference of States Parties.
6. The OPCW has also benefited from China's contributions to the organisation of regional workshops, training programmes as well as equipment support to some Member States. These are valuable contributions to the work of the OPCW and the goals of the Convention. In addition excellent work has also been done in the areas of research on projects supported by the Technical Secretariat.
7. It is a matter of great satisfaction to see participants from the 17 Member States in the region attending this workshop. The countries represented are: Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran, Lao Peoples Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Pakistan, Phillipines, Qatar, Republic of Maldives, Sri Lanka, Thailand, United Arab Emirates and Vietnam and of course our host nation People's Republic of China. These are all Member States that are diverse and yet have a strong interest in issues relating to chemicals and chemical industry. You have travelled long distances to discuss a subject that is of utmost importance for

the Chemical Weapons Convention: Article XI. We look forward to your contributions.

8. The focus of our intentional cooperation programmes is mainly on:
 - a) development of skills and building national capacity;
 - b) promoting exchanges of scientific and technical knowledge; and
 - c) promoting international cooperation in the field of chemistry.

9. The range of these programmes is broad and covers areas such as sponsorship programmes in chemical research, the development of laboratory capacity and individual skills of analytical chemists, and specialised training in the safe management of chemicals. Together, these activities lead to greater awareness of the Convention's obligations at the national level and thus become a positive factor towards more effective national implementation of the Convention.

Ladies and Gentlemen

10. The vast majority of Member States do not possess chemical weapons and a large number also does not have extensive chemical industry. Yet they are all participants in this collective endeavour to make our world free of chemical weapons. As developing countries they do attach a considerable importance to the provisions of Article XI. Many of them seek to improve education and training as well as to acquire better analytical capabilities in the area of peaceful chemistry.

11. This event is taking place at an important juncture. While the number and types of programmes offered by the Secretariat in the

area of international cooperation have steadily expanded, our efforts require continuous refinement and adjustment to better respond to national needs and expectations. We have the task of carefully identifying the priorities for our future actions as well as the resources that will be needed to support international cooperation activities.

12. This is particularly important in two areas, namely, developments in science and technology in the field of chemistry and enhancement of chemical safety and security capabilities, particularly in those countries where the chemical industry is expanding.

13. The Chemical Weapons Convention is a treaty rooted in science and technology. Article XI refers specifically to “international exchange” and “development and promotion” of scientific and technological information and knowledge. The OPCW’s Scientific Advisory Board is mandated to provide scientific and technological advice, including on technical matters related to cooperation. At the moment the SAB is finalising a Report on Developments on Science and Technology for the Third Review Conference. Likewise, the SAB’s temporary working group on Education and Outreach is preparing a Report that will include recommendations on how to further develop OPCW’s relationship with the scientific community and the chemical industry and promote a culture of responsibility. The insights and recommendations contained in these reports together with the inputs from States Parties will be a useful basis for enhancing international cooperation programmes in areas related to science and technology.

14. The recent decision on Article XI provides a useful framework for discussions on this topic as it specifically refers to measures to facilitate States Parties participation in the fullest possible exchange of chemicals, equipments and scientific and technical information relating to the development and application of chemistry.

15. With regard to chemical safety and security this is a field where there is an increasing interest as it is considered a fundamental element in the effort to prevent the re-emergence of chemical weapons and the misuse of toxic chemicals. In accordance with the decision on Article XI, the OPCW shall conduct, based on inputs from National Authorities and relevant stakeholders, a needs assessment on tools and guidance that would be helpful for promoting chemical safety and security. With this aim the Secretariat has established a Task Force that is considering potential roles for the Organisation in these fields by identifying best practices, enhancing cooperation with international partners, and assisting in national capacity-building. This Workshop is a good opportunity to listen to Asian States Parties' views on how the OPCW should increase its engagement on chemical safety and security in the region.

Distinguished participants:

16. The purpose of this workshop is to take the CSP decision on Article XI forward and to look more closely into the regional needs and priorities. The Technical Secretariat hopes to gain better

insights in terms of setting the priorities based on direct needs of the Asian region. It will then be able to tailor future activities for maximum impact within the limited resources available.

17. We also hope that the workshop, while enhancing communication among the relevant stakeholders, will launch a discussion on the elements of the regional strategy as it relates to the international cooperation activities in the peaceful uses of chemistry. The regional strategy can be fully implemented through the support and cooperation of Member States of the region. Hence it will be important to consider how such regional cooperation and support can be extended towards implementation of the strategy. A number of Member States are coming forward to host and support regional activities and we look forward to the deliberations that will strengthen this regional support and enhance the synergies from such cooperation.

18. One such idea that has been presented to the Member States for consideration is the Regional Resource Partners concept, I hope you will have an opportunity to reflect on this proposal and in particular, how it might enhance implementation of international cooperation activities in the region.

19. The workshop's programme is wide-ranging. We have a framework that can enable the development of a strategy within the decision on Article XI. In addition given the rapid pace of expansion in the field of chemistry in the region, the deliberation may also be forward looking to ensure enhanced use of chemistry safely and for peaceful purpose. Your suggestions here would also

act as a template for consideration at other regional workshops. With the presence of the representatives from Member States of the region who bring to this forum a rich diversity of experience and knowledge, we can all look forward to a most fruitful exchange of views and ideas.

Distinguished participants,

20. The OPCW makes a substantial contribution to promoting international peace and security. Our accomplishments over the last 15 years provide hope and reinforce our determination to deal with the challenges that we will face in the future.

21. As we are nearing the completion of our disarmament tasks, the gradual reduction in the amount of resources dedicated to the destruction of chemical weapons will allow us to dedicate more attention to the objective of preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons. This objective will in fact become central to the long-term mission of the OPCW. Particular attention will have to be devoted to the verification of the global chemical industry and monitoring of the trade in chemicals worldwide.

22. It is my sincere hope that your work during the next two-and-a-half days will contribute towards furthering the goals of the OPCW in the realm of its international cooperation activities as well as generate recommendations and foster cooperation between Member States in the region. The experience and outcomes of this workshop will help us to organise similar workshops for other regions.

23. In conclusion, I wish to express my confidence that with your input and support, we will continue to bring greater efficiencies and depth to OPCW international cooperation activities in this region and beyond. I am sure the results of this workshop will strengthen the application and effectiveness of the CWC with regard to Article XI.

24. I look forward to your recommendations and wish you every success.

Thank you for your attention.