

## **Informal meeting between States Parties and the chemical industry**

*Welcome remarks by the Director-General*

You Excellency Ambassador Nassima Baghli,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a distinct pleasure to welcome you here today for this informal meeting between representatives of States Parties to the CWC and the chemical industry.

This meeting follows a well-established tradition of dialogue and cooperation between the OPCW and its Member States and the chemical industry, and aims to contribute to a very important process in the context of the implementation of the Convention.

As Ambassador Baghli said, in April next year, the Conference of the States Parties will meet in a special session to review the operation of the CWC in the past five years and to look at the future with a view further to strengthen this important tool in the international disarmament architecture and to maintain its relevance and effectiveness.

It is a pleasure to see such a [broad] participation from industry representatives worldwide, as well as from delegations based in The Hague [and from capitals]. This is evidence of the commitment that the main constituencies of this treaty attach to the achievement of its goals -- in a spirit of dialogue and cooperation – working together for a world free of chemical weapons.

The Chemical Weapons Convention enshrines the ambitious goal of a total and verifiable prohibition of chemical weapons. In order to make this prohibition endure, the Convention establishes a multi-dimensional system to also ensure that chemical weapons will never emerge again and that toxic chemicals will not be misused. Industry verification is key to this effort. Under the Convention, if chemicals with the potential of being misused for non-peaceful purposes are produced or used in sufficient quantity, the relevant facility is subject to verification. States Parties have

declared over 5,000 chemical facilities that deal with such chemicals or use technologies that are deemed relevant for the purposes of the Convention. And of course, this audience hardly needs reminding that the chemical industry is producing an ever broader variety of new compounds.

The OPCW remains acutely aware about the chemical industry's importance as a core industry whose products sustain modern life. Toxic chemicals are manufactured and used around the world – safely and securely – in thousands of legitimate products and industrial processes.

The OPCW inspection process is global in scale and is undertaken in every country where inspectable activity has been declared. So far the OPCW has conducted nearly 2,300 such inspections in around 80 countries. It must be firmly stressed that these inspections are not driven by suspicion. They rather represent the agreement between states that such measures -- conducted without discrimination – constitute an important means to build confidence. They also provide transparency and reinforce the industry's image as a responsible partner supporting the objectives of global peace and security. This makes sense both from the ethical and business perspectives.

I am proud to be able say that the Convention now covers over 98% of the worldwide chemical industry that is relevant to its implementation. It therefore goes without saying that full and effective implementation of the Convention relies on the chemical industry, which has a vital role in ensuring the Convention's continued success.

During the negotiations on the Chemical Weapons Convention, the chemical industry agreed to a “declaration and verification process by inspection” to provide assurances that toxic chemicals are not used for weapons production. This was a major commitment and represents the backbone of the relevant provisions in the Convention.

At the same time, the Convention ensures balance in the verification process. This is one of the crucial factors that make the treaty practical, workable and effective. Key provisions in the Convention take into account industry concerns in the areas of protecting confidential information. Inspections under the Convention are carried out

in the least intrusive manner possible -- and according to specific guidelines for access to relevant information and facilities during verification activities, for which specific time limitations are also established. The OPCW remains committed to these important principles, which are essential elements in making the CWC work effectively.

We must continue to ensure that the verification regime, both now and in the future, will not impede the commercial progress of the industry. It is, therefore, important for the OPCW and the industry to continue to maintain close liaison and cooperation and to discuss together about the new challenges and the ways of improvements.

With regard to declarations there have been improvements, such as a better use of electronic tools, but further progress is still desirable, particularly on making timely submissions. There is also a need to reduce transfer discrepancies, especially in the context of trade involving States not Parties. States Parties should likewise consider how providing voluntary information relevant to the purposes of the Convention can add to the value of declarations.

With respect to inspection activities, sampling and analysis is acknowledged as an important, objective tool to verify the absence of scheduled chemicals. The Technical Secretariat is preparing itself to conduct sampling and analysis in a few inspections of Schedule 3 facilities and in Other Chemical Production Facilities, and States Parties are engaged in discussions with the Secretariat.

Another idea for making verification both more effective and efficient is related to verification of mixed plant sites, on which I would welcome industry views. If we could inspect at the same time facilities declared under two different parts of the verification regime, the plant site would conceivably receive fewer inspections and the inspection team would get a fuller picture of the activities that are relevant to the CWC.

Verification is not the only area of relevance in the interaction between the OPCW and the chemical industry. The emerging focus on chemical safety and chemical security is a key component of the effort to prevent the re-emergence of chemical

weapons and the misuse of toxic chemicals. A number of developing States Parties have expressed a demand for advice in order to strengthen chemical safety and security. The OPCW could serve as a forum for exchanging views on current practices and hence catalysing the identification of good practices. Across the world there are various good practices in the field of safety and security of chemical facilities that could usefully be made widely available. The OPCW has in fact programmes relating to industry outreach, promoting safety and security in the chemical industry. I am sure that the OPCW can continue to rely on your support for these cooperative activities and programmes.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As I've already mentioned, the chemical industry plays a vital role in full and effective implementation of the Convention. There are various ways that the OPCW and the chemical industry can engage. We can hold further meetings of the type that we have today. We can also strengthen the dialogue with the various industry associations across the world and make it more regular. Furthermore, the Secretariat can more often invite representatives of the chemical industry to OPCW events, and I would also be pleased to make Secretariat staff members available to speak or participate at relevant events organized by the industry. There are also various mechanisms that engage both the industry and the international community, through which we can also engage. And finally, we can usefully augment industry expertise and understanding in the OPCW's Scientific Advisory Board and its temporary working groups: I encourage States Parties to bear this in mind when nominating individuals for potential membership of the Board.

This year I have communicated with the president of the International Council of Chemical Associations, Mr Andrew Liveris, about the need for a re-invigorated dialogue. Several themes could usefully be explored with the industry through the ICCA, including outreach and awareness and relevant development in science and technology – in addition to the topics which I have already mentioned today, such as further improving the Article VI verification regime and promoting chemical safety and chemical security. This communication is being elaborated at a working level

between the Secretariat and representatives of the ICCA. It is important that this dialogue is representative of the global chemical industry.

I am, therefore, grateful to the industry representatives for taking time to engage with us today and look forward your active participation, constructive contributions, and interactive discussions.

In particular, I am looking forward to hearing from the industry about the relevant developments which have occurred in recent years, as well as current trends and likely future developments in the chemical industry. Understanding such trends and developments are exceedingly important for the full and effective implementation of the Convention.

In close dialogue with the chemical industry, the OPCW must take the appropriate action to ensure that the implementation of the Convention is sufficiently nimble and robust, not only to keep pace with developments in the industry and in science and technology, but also to stay ahead of the curve.

This applies across the breadth of the substantive articles of the Convention, including industry verification, national implementation, and peaceful use of chemistry.

Thank you for your participation and attention.