



KEYNOTE ADDRESS

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CTBTO CONFERENCE ON ‘KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS & GLOBAL EDUCATION’

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Excellencies,

Distinguished participants,

Ladies & Gentlemen,

At the very outset, I wish to thank Ambassador Tibor Toth for inviting me to this important forum and for the warm welcome he extended to me. Ambassador Toth's career in disarmament has been exemplary. His services have been many and contributed to diverse areas of the subject. It is my hope that the international community will continue to benefit from his valuable experience and unique insights.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the CTBTO Preparatory Commission for organizing this event on ‘Knowledge Transfer, International Organizations & Global

Education'. International institutions, particularly those in the forefront of work on disarmament, are the result of decades of patient diplomacy; one hundred years of ceaseless effort in the case of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). These institutions were created to protect and uphold lofty ideals, and the norms arising from unprecedented international treaties. Treaties such as the CTBT and the CWC restore hope in our collective ability to reverse the tide of what once seemed a never ending arms race. But apart from the all important contribution of creating new, vitally needed global norms, the two have also evolved institutions, resources, knowledge and expertise which have value not just for our own work but for the larger project of promoting global peace and security.

Speaking on behalf of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), I will say that the relevance of our work to the topic of this forum is obvious. The chemical weapons ban is among history's most successful security and disarmament regimes – the singular one that requires the complete elimination of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction under international verification. In nearly 16 years of its operation, significant progress has been made on the destruction of chemical weapons; in establishing a system of verification; on achieving universality for the Convention, and, in international cooperation for promoting the peaceful use of chemistry. Today, 188 states are parties to the Convention, nearly 80% of all declared stockpiles of chemical weapons have been destroyed, and we look forward to the years to come, as our commitment to these purposes is renewed and strengthened, and the prohibition against chemical weapons is made permanent.

Over the course of the operation of this successful regime, the OPCW has become a repository of knowledge, skills, and good practices in disarmament and an important part of the global management of security. Our engagement with States Parties, experts, the chemical industry, and other stakeholders, and our work in implementing the various provisions of the Convention, has led to the development of considerable expertise and experience.

When institutions generate such wealth of experience and well-honed good practices, it becomes not only possible to engage in knowledge transfer and global education, it, in fact, becomes a responsibility. Without the shadow of a doubt, it is our duty, in the spirit of the Conventions and customary practice that we follow, and as organizations fully equipped to take on the task, to share our knowledge and to educate, for the progress and advancement of the international community and people around the world.

What do the terms knowledge transfer and global education mean, in concrete terms, for international organizations such as the OPCW? They constitute, fundamentally, four elements: One, the sharing of knowledge to enhance implementation of the legal norms contained in the treaties; Two, imparting skills across borders; Three, the transfer of institutional experience from one generation to the next within the organization; and Four, reaching out to a larger global audience to sensitize public opinion to the imperatives of disarmament and non-proliferation. They mean, therefore, the sharing of best practices, expertise, information and experience with States Parties, national authorities, and stakeholders, in collaborative and mutually reinforcing ways.

Ladies & Gentlemen,

The OPCW oversees the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Knowledge sharing is central to the objective of enabling an ever growing group of stakeholders to fulfill the terms of the Convention.

Amongst our tasks, disarmament is primary; but so is the prevention of the re-emergence of chemical weapons and keeping ourselves in readiness to assist countries should they be threatened with chemical weapons. Promoting international cooperation for peaceful uses of chemistry is yet another important part of our mandate. We also work to develop national capacities for the effective domestic implementation of the Convention. In short, our overarching goal is to uphold the norm against chemical weapons, and to ensure that the Convention becomes a permanent barrier against them, now and for the future. All of these functions and the experience of executing them constitute not only knowledge to be transferred outside of the organisation, but also knowledge which is to be preserved within as institutional memory. In keeping with our mandate, our knowledge transfer and global education activities centre on the goals of disarmament, non-proliferation, assistance and protection, and international cooperation. These are the four broad programme areas which over the years have incorporated related activities and programmes, especially under the rubric of international cooperation mandate.

The OPCW oversees the disarmament of chemical weapons stockpiles through the verification of demilitarization. It also conducts verification of industry in order to ensure

the non-proliferation of chemical weapons. As the project on destruction of chemical weapons approaches completion, the work of the OPCW will be more concerned with preventing the reemergence of chemical weapons. The verification regime and data monitoring systems of the OPCW which act as a safeguard against the diversion or transfer of chemicals of concern and precursors, for unlawful purposes, are essential to the security objectives of the Convention. This is a function that will continue to play a vital role in ensuring that chemistry is used for no other purposes than peaceful.

The verification regime of the Convention has created a new and important set of skills which require preservation far beyond the current mandate and context. The OPCW has developed expertise which must be retained for the present and future. For example, the expertise of OPCW inspectors involved in demilitarization of stockpiles came from state institutions and former chemical weapons and defence programmes. The ban on chemical weapons has led to a progressive dismantling of chemical weapons programmes. Consequently, no new personnel are being exposed to the knowledge about chemical weapons production and handling. The expertise is becoming scarce. These skills are not only important but they are also unique, and it is crucial that they be preserved for future eventualities, and as permanent institutional knowledge. This knowledge must also be transferred from one generation to the other within the organization. The 7 year tenure policy for our staff makes this even more important. Therefore, we intent to establish a global centre for excellence in order to make the OPCW the repository of knowledge and expertise on chemical weapons. We see this as a potentially vital asset for our States Parties.

The OPCW was established to promote the goals of international peace and security, and an important part of its security function is helping states maintain a readiness to respond to the use or threat of use of chemical weapons. Article X of the Chemical Weapons Convention makes Assistance and Protection an important part of our work. The OPCW's Technical Secretariat works to disseminate its institutional experience and knowledge to States Parties to assist them in the development of protective capacity against chemical weapons, in the eventuality that they are confronted with their use.

We conduct basic and advanced training courses for personnel from national authorities of Member States so that we are together able to maintain a consistent level of response capability. International courses are also offered by States Parties themselves to train experts, while the OPCW focuses more on national and regional courses. Exercises on the delivery of assistance are organized with States Parties and other international organizations to train personnel and assess our overall preparedness for emergency situations.

The environment in which the Convention operates is changing, as is the nature of threats. The international system today faces the spectre of the use of chemical weapons by non-state actors and terrorists. It will be crucial for the OPCW to work with states to maintain readiness to respond also to these non-conventional security threats.

Consequently, a renewed interest is being shown by member States not only in OPCW programmes on assistance and protection but also in chemical safety and security which

is emerging as an important programme area for the Organization. We work to enhance safety and security in States Parties by enabling the sharing of tools, best practices and knowledge to mitigate risks to the chemical industry from accidents or terror threats. Where our guidance is required, we aim to ensure that the industry is equipped with a high level of preparedness to deal with adverse incidents involving toxic chemicals, and we are working to make best practices on safety and security available more widely. We see our role in this context as a facilitator and not as a forum for creating new obligations.

The OPCW's work on International Cooperation, as distinct from the specialized field of assistance and protection against chemical weapons, involves a host of activities, workshops, and training by which skills and associated expertise are passed on to a wider pool of individuals, institutions and personnel from our States Parties.

The broad range of our initiatives includes annual and regional meetings of national authorities, sub-regional and thematic workshops on a range of issues and for implementation support. These events are key to creating and strengthening a mechanism of cooperation between the OPCW and national authorities.

Knowledge sharing takes the form of courses and programmes such as the Associate Programme, the Analytical Skills Development Course and Laboratory Assistance Programme to advance practical knowledge, strengthen national capacity for chemical analysis and monitoring. The Research Projects programme, provides support to research in relevant peaceful applications of chemistry. In addition we also offer programmes for

Conference Support, Equipment Exchange, and Internship Support. E-Learning tools will be increasingly used in our training activities. These have all been designed to impart skills and knowledge to experts and personnel from States Parties, both to enhance their expertise, and facilitate the implementation of the Convention.

As part of our international cooperation activities, we seek partnerships in knowledge sharing and mutual education. Here the focus is not only the strengthening of relations between the OPCW and States Parties, but also between the OPCW and the chemical industry. The Associate Programme of the OPCW has been designed to enhance national capability by offering training in chemistry and chemical engineering and facilitating industry related implementation of the Convention.

Knowledge transfer consists not only in opening channels of communication and imparting skills, but in keeping those channels and institutionalizing that mutual exchange. The Technical Secretariat has instituted an Alumni Association for the Associate programme which serves experts and groups that have attended and benefitted from it. It facilitates the exchange of experience and views between them. The Technical Secretariat has also recently piloted a mentoring programme whereby national authorities can benefit and learn from the guidance and support of more experienced and fully functional national authorities in other countries.

Our international cooperation initiatives are not just classrooms for the imparting of knowledge, but aim for meaningful interaction in the service of the Convention's vision of a world free of chemical weapons.

A common challenge encountered in realising the goals of disarmament treaties is the uneven ability of States Parties to effectively implement their acquired obligations within their domestic jurisdiction. The OPCW Technical Secretariat is charged with facilitating the implementation of the Convention, in the course of which, skills, knowledge and expertise are shared with States Parties to the Convention. Knowledge transfer, therefore, becomes a part of the OPCW's mandate to provide all necessary assistance to national authorities of States Parties, including coordinating communication between experts and helping with domestic legislation, in their work to fully implement all provisions of the Convention nationally.

In accordance with the mandate of the CWC, a Scientific Advisory Board, consisting of experts, was established to assist the OPCW to render specialist advice on science and technology to States Parties. The SAB has recently set up a working group on education and outreach, which is considering ways in which our knowledge and ideas can be further spread in the best interests of international security and the furtherance of the objectives of the Convention.

Our knowledge transfer and global education aims are in no way limited to the sharing of technical expertise. Indeed, if we are to be the agents of disarmament and non-

proliferation, three things are elementary – universalizing the norm among states, ensuring its respect through effective national implementation of the provisions of the Convention, and perpetuating the norm so that it becomes embedded in the global public consciousness.

The OPCW's work on enhancing universality of the Convention has taken the form of constant engagement with non-States Parties, public diplomacy, and global education initiatives. In an effort to enhance universality, we seek to engage non-States Parties through seminars, technical assistance visits and training programmes. These are intended to facilitate the transition and provide knowledge and information about the obligations and benefits of the Convention. There has also been an effort towards cooperation with other relevant regional and international organizations on universality and outreach. We have cooperated with the CTBTO in outreach programmes and greatly benefitted from their experience. The synergy between the efforts and activities of relevant international organizations need to be further explored.

Our Public Diplomacy efforts are geared towards the education of a global audience in the ideals that drive the chemical weapons ban and the affiliated work of the OPCW. Even after complete chemical disarmament has been achieved, we will remain committed to upholding and perpetuating the prohibition on chemical weapons. The ideal of a world free of chemical weapons is a promise as important for future generations, as it is for us today. As the world moves closer to the destruction of all declared stockpiles of chemical weapons, it becomes not less important to reiterate our commitment to disarmament, but

more. We have a responsibility to not only eliminate the weapons, but to eliminate any possibility of their re-emergence in the future. And to that end, we know this much is certain – the norm must be permanent. The norm must not only survive, but be reaffirmed. The norm must become more than just law; it must become integral to our deliberations on peace and security.

The OPCW's global education and public diplomacy efforts are designed for the fulfillment of precisely these objectives. The organization collaborates in an Annual Summer Programme on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction for graduate students and young professionals to provide a holistic understanding of the history, purpose, and provisions of the international law on WMD prohibition and disarmament. We believe that a key aspect of our education initiatives will also be to develop learning tools to reach out to learners, students and other stakeholders of different ages, academic and career groups. The OPCW is currently working in cooperation with educators in the Netherlands, and with other international organizations on such tools.

Events like seminars and conferences on security and disarmament issues are organized on a regular basis for state representatives, policy makers, scientists, and the civil society.

We strive to make the most of electronic media to publicize important events, activities, and landmarks. The audio-visual medium, online and social media presence have all

helped take the message of a world free of chemical weapons to a wider international audience.

What I have attempted to describe here today are the forms of learning and outreach that make up the OPCW's work on knowledge transfer and global education, and what such activities mean for international organizations today. Each of these types of learning is central to the functioning of the OPCW's own regime and to all those who have a stake in a chemical weapons free world – a world in which the science of chemistry is used for peaceful purposes alone and for the well being of humanity.

Distinguished guests,

Ladies & Gentlemen,

Whenever the world commits to come together for a cause and creates institutions to safeguard those commitments, it is an opportunity and a responsibility. For us, representing those entities, it becomes incumbent to use our institutional experience for the greater good – in the interest of the treaties and conventions we seek to uphold, in the interest of the norms which guide our work, and in the interest of building the capabilities of those who work with us, and those whose work has an impact on the ideals we seek to uphold.

The world today is closer, and more connected, than it has been ever before in history. Our challenges are shared. The issues and concerns we face, as humanity, are indivisible.

Our hopes, our aims, and our aspirations, are global. And our vision for the future is a collective one. These common collective aspirations and challenges will be met not only in the establishment of institutions but through the development of networks of knowledge, so that experience and wisdom can be shared across borders, and across issue areas.

Let us remember that we co-exist in a world wide partnership with endless possibilities of mutual gain. Let us work together to realize that vast potential for the common good.

Thank you.