



ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION
OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS

**“2013 CHEMICAL WEAPONS DEMILITARISATION
CONFERENCE”**

ADDRESS BY

AMBASSADOR AHMET ÜZÜMCÜ
DIRECTOR-GENERAL
OF THE ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF
CHEMICAL WEAPONS

London, United Kingdom

6 June 2013

Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to be back in the United Kingdom to participate in a Conference we had all thought would not take place again after its 15th edition in Glasgow last year. I whole heartedly endorse the decision to resume this annual deliberation which from the perspective of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons is an important activity. This is especially true, given the turn of events that have seen the re-emergence of the threat of use of chemical weapons.

Before I go on to describe our progress towards our singular goal of total elimination of chemical weapons from the world, I want to express my sincere appreciation to the United Kingdom, for its very strong support in our endeavours that manifests itself in a variety of initiatives including this event. I wish to thank DSTL and others who contributed the organization of this conference.

In this sixteenth year of the operation of the Convention, steady progress continues to be made in our efforts to destroy the remaining declared chemical weapons stockpiles.

As of 31 May 2013, the overall amount of Category 1 chemical weapons verified as destroyed reached 56,093 MTs, or almost 81% of the declared chemical weapons.

The United States has eliminated nearly 25,000 MT's, or close to 90% of the total declared amount of Category 1 chemical weapons and plans to complete the destruction of the remaining weapons by September 2023.

Seven chemical-weapons-destruction facilities (CWDF's) in the United States have completed operations, while two others – at Pueblo and Blue Grass - are under construction and systemisation. Destruction at these sites is planned to start in 2015 and 2020, respectively.

I joined Ambassador Horin of the Ukraine, the Chairperson of the Executive Council who is among us today and other members when they recently visited Pueblo and Blue Grass. Such visits, both to the United States and Russia, allow a better understanding of the complexities involved in CW destruction, as well as the technical and other challenges. Meetings with senior officials in Washington re-confirmed the commitment of the United States to completing the destruction of its remaining chemical weapons as soon as practicable and in a safe, environmentally sound and transparent manner.

On its part, the Russian Federation has continued its destruction operations at 4 sites – Leonidovka, Maradykovsky, Pochep, and Shchuchye and has completed the destruction of nearly 29,500 MTs, or 74% of the total declared amount of Category 1 chemical weapons. It plans to destroy the remaining amount by December 2015. The Russian Federation implements its concept of gradually bringing CW destruction facilities into operation, by commissioning individual units, designed for the destruction of a particular type of chemical agent or munitions. The new facility being built at Kizner is expected to become operational in the second half of 2013.

The third active destruction programme pertains to Libya where a notable development is the completion of the destruction of the remaining bulk sulphur mustard. As many of you will recall, sulphur mustard destruction

in Libya was initiated in October 2010 before being halted in February 2011 due to the malfunctioning of a heating component of the neutralization unit. Circumstances inside the country at the time did not allow for the quick resumption of operations.

Libya implemented a number of precautionary measures to secure the remaining chemical weapons while they repaired and then maintained for use the sulfur mustard neutralisation and hydrolysis system at Ruwagha. The Secretariat worked closely with the Libyan authorities throughout this period, with assistance provided by the United States, Canada and Germany.

In a visit to Ruwagha in early April 2013, the Secretariat was able to confirm the readiness of the site for the resumption of operations. On 16 April we deployed the inspection team, and by 4 May the destruction of the remaining 9 MTs of sulphur mustard was completed. This brings the total of Category 1 CW destroyed by Libya to 22.3 MTs or roughly 85% of its declared stocks.

We are in close contact with the Libyan authorities and expect them to procure soon the equipment necessary for the destruction of the remaining munitions. Libya intends to complete this process by the end of this year.

Iraq, continues to work with the Secretariat and other States parties to complete the assessment of the declared chemical weapons and move forward with an appropriate disposal method for the chemical weapons left over after being rendered unusable by the UN inspection teams.

The demilitarisation programme includes an assurance that the capability to produce chemical weapons is permanently and verifiably eliminated. Of the 70 chemical-weapons-production facilities (CWPFs) declared by 13 States Parties, 43 have already been destroyed and 21 have been converted for purposes not prohibited under the Convention. Eleven States Parties have completed the destruction or conversion of all their declared production facilities. All converted facilities remain under systematic verification by the OPCW to ensure that they are fully consistent with the approved conversion requests.

The declaration, verification and destruction of old and abandoned chemical weapons continue to remain a major preoccupation for the Organisation. Nineteen States Parties have declared possession of old and/or abandoned chemical weapons. All these States face similar and delicate problems. The discovery of remnants of past conflicts remains an ongoing and unpredictable phenomenon. New discoveries continue, which have to be declared according to the Convention to allow for the verification of the destruction process by the OPCW. The concerned States Parties are making every effort to carry out destruction of these weapons in a safe and effective manner, and the Technical Secretariat stands ready to support them fully.

In this context, China and Japan have continued their cooperation in dealing with the historic legacy of chemical weapons abandoned by Japan. 35,681 ACW's have already been destroyed by Japan, with the assistance of China, at the Mobile Destruction Facility, at Nanjing. In Shijiazhuang, destruction of ACW began in December 2012 and is currently ongoing. China and Japan continue to work together for the redeployment of the MDF from Nanjing to Wuhan. Excavation and

recovery operations in Haerbaling also commenced in December 2012 and preparations for destruction there are ongoing aiming to begin destruction before the end of 2013. China and Japan have offered to host a visit by the Council members in September 2013 to Haerbaling.

On old chemical weapons inspections continue to be conducted at OCW storage sites. In many cases, while destruction operations have made considerable progress, recoveries of significant quantities of old chemical weapons continue to be made.

The destruction of any chemical weapon – whether from military stockpiles, or old or abandoned weapons, requires expertise, professionalism and dedication. I commend all those who are involved in this endeavour.

I also want to take the opportunity to praise the continued commitment of the possessor States to uphold their obligations under the Convention. They have overcome many difficulties and we should continue to encourage them, where possible, to do their utmost to accelerate the current schedule and ensure the complete destruction within the shortest time possible.

Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before long, we will witness a historic occasion. It will be for the first time that an entire category of weapons of mass destruction gets eliminated under international verification. This should be welcomed by the international community.

This, however raises the question whether with that imminent landmark our job will be done; in which case, for what purpose will the OPCW continue to function.

The answer, which I repeat in my speeches, is obvious. The Convention **must** remain as the permanent barrier against chemical weapons. The threat from chemical weapons can never be considered as having disappeared. The chemical weapons ban must therefore be seen not only as the Convention, but the norm which underpins it. A norm which must be preserved and strengthened in the name of international peace and security for all times to come.

The effectiveness, credibility and confidence in our verification regime will remain at the heart of the Convention. And, it will acquire greater importance in the future to ensure the prevention of re-emergence of chemical weapons. We will continue to look at how we can make the best use of the knowledge, and expertise, we have developed. In doing so, we need to keep abreast of developments in science and technology.

The Convention's provisions on assistance and protection against chemical weapons represent an example of how we can make adjustments to accommodate evolving conditions, perceptions and demands. There are increasing concerns that industrial chemicals could be used by terrorists. The situation has brought about a change in expectations. There is now greater emphasis on developing capacities of national response teams and systems that can effectively respond to terrorist incidents.

To make our work in this area more responsive to future needs we are seeking to enhance our coordination with international agencies whose mandates deal with prevention and consequence mitigation in the event of terrorist use of biological or chemical weapons. The Secretariat is also enhancing its focus on developing greater coordination at the regional or sub-regional levels.

The threat from non-state actors and of terrorism in particular also justifies a role for the Organisation in promoting chemical safety and security against the hostile use of toxic chemicals or preventing chemical accidents. In this context, our traditionally close cooperation with the chemical industry offers avenues that can lead to providing States Parties with useful information and exposing them to existing best practices in chemical safety and security.

The Convention and its future are integrally linked to developments in science and technology. The work of OPCW Scientific Advisory Board today receives much greater attention. If we are to fully understand the implications of the fast paced developments in science, we need to effectively tap the potential that SAB offers.

A related matter concerns our interaction with the civil society, academics and students. While the potential for the revolution in life sciences is undisputed, there is also scope for abuse. Education and awareness-raising about the norms and principles enshrined in the CWC are therefore becoming increasingly important. We will continue to look for opportunities to disseminate these norms to the general public and, especially, among scientists, engineers, and academics. We are encouraging States parties to host a series of events around the globe in

2014 to help promote education and outreach. Many countries have shown interest. Following those events in States Parties we intend to have a meeting at the end of 2014 in The Hague to discuss how best we can take education forward.

As a permanent guarantee against chemical weapons, it is also vital for the Convention to achieve full universality. The Convention today underscores the commitment of 189 States Parties. This number represents an outstanding global endorsement. I warmly welcome the newest State Party, Somalia, who passed their accession documents to the UNSG in New York recently.

Situations such as in Syria underline the necessity of making the Convention fully universal. Which means that every remaining country should join the CWC and become legally bound to respect its prohibitions.

All countries of the world have united in expressing their deep concern that chemical weapons may have been used in Syria and condemned their use by any one under any circumstances. As you will know Syria is a non State party. Therefore, OPCW cannot on its own conduct any verification activities within Syria. In countries that are not CWC members, the Secretary-General of the United Nations can authorise an investigation. The OPCW, is the only international organisation that has the relevant expertise to assist in an investigation of this nature

A request for an investigation of alleged use of chemical weapons was initially made by the Syrian government in March this year. Two other UN Member States have subsequently asked for further investigations to

take place. For this purpose, and in accordance with the terms of the Convention and our arrangements with the United Nations, the resources of the Organisation were placed at the disposal of the Secretary-General. Due to a lack of agreement on the modalities of the investigation between the Syrian government and the United Nations, the actual investigation within Syria has yet to take place. Our team however remains ready and continues to build up its information data base relevant to the investigation.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Third Review Conference which met in April in The Hague was very successful. It has adopted a substantive, forward looking report, providing us with a roadmap for the years to come. It will now be up to the States Parties and the TS to turn these recommendations into practice. I should like to share with you my views on an issue which I feel is vitally important for the future of the CWC. In this room are probably some of the most pre-eminent experts on chemical weapons destruction. It is vital that we never lose that collective knowledge. In its report the Advisory Panel, chaired by Ambassador Rolf Ekéus, reflected upon the future priorities for the OPCW. The Panel recommended that OPCW remains as the 'global repository of knowledge and expertise with regard to chemical weapons disarmament, the verification of their non-possession and non-use, and a repository of knowledge about their destruction' and that 'the OPCW should find ways of ensuring continuity in its knowledge base and expertise in these areas'. This idea was recently endorsed by the Third Review Conference and the Secretariat was tasked to prepare a concept paper for the consideration of States Parties.

With disarmament nearing completion and the consequent structural changes that become inevitable, such knowledge is in danger of dissipating. To ensure that we retain that knowledge for future generations, I plan to set up a training and research centre at the Secretariat which may eventually be called the OPCW Knowledge Management Centre.

The Centre will become the focal point for consolidating OPCW training programmes for both staff and States Parties and will offer modular training covering a wide range of subjects. It will also provide support to regional centres of training that States Parties are encouraged to establish. I look forward to working with many of you as we develop this concept, and to draw on your practical experience and knowledge.

I would like to conclude by stating, and confidently so, that a strong foundation for a permanent chemical weapons ban now exists. It is our responsibility to continue to build on the success already achieved. The validity and relevance of the Convention remain unquestionable.

The Chemical Weapons Convention and the OPCW constitute one of history's most successful multilateral institutions and represent a landmark endeavour in the story of global disarmament. It is now up to all of us as global citizens to keep moving together on a path that leads to the consolidation of our gains and opens up new vistas of peace.

I thank you for your attention.