

OPENING REMARKS BY

**AMBASSADOR GRACE ASIRWATHAM,
DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE OPCW,
AT THE KIZNER CWDF OPENING CEREMONY
19 December 2013**

It is a great pleasure to be here on this very special occasion dedicated to the launch of the Kizner Chemical Weapons Destruction Facility (CWDF). On behalf of the OPCW, I offer my sincere congratulations to the Russian Federation on the inauguration of this facility.

This occasion marks yet another milestone in the Russian Federation's efforts towards accomplishing the total destruction of its chemical weapons stockpiles within the time frame agreed with States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

Both the Technical Secretariat and States Parties to the CWC have recognised the determination shown by the Russian Federation in responding to this challenge over the years. They have also been appreciative of the openness and transparency demonstrated by the Russian Federation in this process from the time that the Convention entered into force.

This recognition was clearly demonstrated in the constructive and forward-looking decision adopted by the Conference of States Parties at its Sixteenth Session, held in 2011, regarding the final destruction deadline. Although that deadline has been missed, the decision enables the Russian Federation, and others, to complete the task of destroying their remaining chemical weapons in an atmosphere of cooperation and understanding. This decision preserves the integrity of the Convention and ensures that our work continues without any impediments.

It is my firm belief that the destruction of chemical weapons is an extraordinary team effort and cannot be carried out without the professionalism and utmost dedication of the people and authorities, at all levels, involved in this process. I wish to acknowledge the efforts of all those involved and wish them every success in their future endeavours.

As a concrete step towards meeting destruction targets, the launch of this new facility is a strong and very encouraging sign of the Russian Federation's continued and unwavering resolve to fulfil its solemn obligations under the Convention.

The destruction of over 71% of Russia's declared chemical weapons stockpiles to date represents remarkable progress, and I wish to commend wholeheartedly the Russian authorities on this important achievement.

In the spirit of cooperation that has always characterised the work of our Organisation, I have no doubt that our collective efforts will help bring Russia's endeavours to successful completion.

As a reliable and dedicated partner in the implementation of the Convention, the Russian Federation has amply demonstrated its staunch commitment to achieving a world that is forever free of the threat of chemical weapons.

It gives me great pleasure to witness yet another milestone contributing to this vision becoming a reality.

I thank you for your attention and wish you every success.