

**Remarks to Formal Open Consultations of the Committee on the
2016 Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of Resolution 1540**

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Mr Chairman,

On behalf of the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, I wish to thank you for inviting the OPCW to participate in this important meeting.

The work of the OPCW in implementing the disarmament and non-proliferation provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention is consistent with the broader objectives of promoting international peace and security, as well as the specific goals of UNSCR 1540.

In relation to UNSCR 1540, preventing non-State actors from acquiring dual-use materials, equipment and technologies has a special resonance for the OPCW.

For chemical terrorism is not a distant or even looming threat, but a current reality.

Tragically, chemical weapons have been used both in the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq over recent years, and continue to be used – including, by some accounts, by ISIS.

The OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mission will, we all hope, shed light on the perpetrators of chemical attacks in Syria – whether by State or non-State actors – and their sponsors.

Let me briefly update you on the progress of our efforts at the OPCW, and offer some thoughts on how we can collaborate further to implement our complementary regimes.

Mr Chairman,

The work of the OPCW makes a vital contribution to international efforts to counter the threat of non-State actors acquiring the means to make, and use, chemical weapons.

The Chemical Weapons Convention provides a broad-ranging bulwark against proliferation through its comprehensive prohibitions relating to the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons.

While it does not explicitly mention non-State actors, the Convention applies to all “natural and legal persons” on the territory of our 192 States Party, covering 98% of the world’s population and territory.

Through their national implementing legislation, our Member States criminalise any activity banned under the Convention – conducted by anyone, in any circumstances.

The Convention is, in addition, the only international treaty that mandates verification of the destruction of an entire class of weapons of mass destruction.

Some 92% of the world’s declared chemical weapons have been verifiably destroyed, and we are on track for the last declared chemical weapons being destroyed in the Russian Federation in 2020 and in the United States in 2023.

The Convention also mandates a system of industry inspections, as well as restrictions and reporting obligations in relation to trade in scheduled chemicals between our States Party and the four States still outside of the Convention – Egypt, Israel, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and South Sudan.

These measures are designed to help us ensure that chemical materials and production technologies are never used for purposes prohibited by the Convention.

Mr Chairman,

As we approach the complete destruction of all declared chemical weapons, we stand at the threshold of a new focus for our work.

The challenge for us now is to ensure that the historic gains we have made in disarmament, and the norms that support them, are not undermined by chemical weapons re-emerging.

At a time when it is increasingly unlikely that States will wage chemical warfare against one another, we are facing the new challenge of terrorists making and using chemical weapons.

To respond effectively to this emerging challenge, it is vital that we intensify international cooperation in pursuit of goals we share in common with UNSCR 1540.

For such cooperation to succeed, however, it must be rooted in effective domestic implementation of the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention, based on national implementing legislation, regulations and enforcement provisions.

This is why the OPCW tirelessly underscores the importance of States Parties enacting the necessary legislative measures to make the Convention as effective as it can be.

This is why the OPCW is hosting discussion among Member States to benchmark relevant measures in our Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism and its Sub-Working Group.

And this is why the OPCW is sponsoring a wide range of training and assistance activities to help our Member States better monitor and control their trade in dual-use chemicals.

The OPCW and the 1540 Committee have cooperated on some of these activities over several years, and we welcome further strengthening of such collaboration.

Through participation in meetings such as these, along with regular exchanges of information on our efforts to support implementation of both the Chemical Weapons Convention and UNSCR 1540, we hope to discover new synergies with which we can further harmonise our activities.

We especially look forward to co-sponsoring future events, exchanging best practices between experts and raising awareness of our respective activities in discussions with States Parties and other partners.

With that, Mr Chairman, I conclude my statement and look forward to our discussions.

Thank you.