



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF CANADA, AUSTRALIA, AND NEW ZEALAND (CANZ) AT THE
TWENTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES**

AGENDA ITEM 22: FOLLOW-UP TO THE REVIEW CONFERENCES

Chair,

Thank you for giving me the floor. I have the honour of addressing the Conference today on behalf of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

Chair, we all as States Parties have a duty to uphold the Chemical Weapons Convention, and to support the Technical Secretariat in its complex work. In such challenging times and as we face the threat of chemical weapons re-emerging, it is more important than ever to work together to support the Organisation as it carries out its mandate.

We will continue to advocate for a Technical Secretariat that is resourced to do the job we have asked of it. In that regard, we thank the budget Co-facilitators for their leadership, and call on all States Parties to agree the Revised Programme and Budget for 2025 by consensus.

Chair, the OPCW will have the best capability when it recruits on as wide a geographical basis as possible. Different regions bring diversity of thought, a breadth of experience and cultural and local knowledge. The Secretariat should reflect the broad range of States Parties to this Convention. Both the Technical Secretariat and States Parties have work to do to identify opportunities to improve geographical representation. We welcome the updates provided by the Secretariat on the geographical representation roadmap.

We will continue to look for ways to support the Technical Secretariat to implement positive hiring practices. This includes support to the proposal for providing the Secretariat with some limited flexibility to re-hire former professional staff, on an exceptional basis. Such flexibility promotes geographical representation and gender balance within the Organisation. Our role as States Parties is to ensure the Technical Secretariat has the policies in place to maintain knowledge and expertise, while also respecting the non-career nature of the Organisation. This is something we believe we can achieve, and we look forward to progressing discussions in the coming year.

Chair, the full, equal, and meaningful participation and leadership of women in global disarmament fora, including the OPCW, fosters international peace and security. We welcome

the steps taken by the Director General to promote gender equality within the Organisation. CANZ believes that further action is required to accelerate progress towards gender equality and integrate gender perspectives in the work of the Organisation and the implementation of the Convention. We call on all States Parties to support the Technical Secretariat in this regard and look forward to further engagement with the Secretariat on the implementation of the gender roadmap.

Chair, it is clear to us that a broad and inclusive range of voices enrich the work of the OPCW and improve its outcomes. This is not limited to the Secretariat and States Parties. We recognize the expertise, the accountability, and the unique perspective that civil society brings to the table to advance our shared objective of a world permanently free of chemical weapons. The contributions of academics, scientists, NGOs, and industry experts should be welcomed into this arena, and their involvement should be encouraged. CANZ continues to support a more streamlined and transparent NGO accreditation process, which will promote efficiency, consistency, and transparency. We regret that two countries have opted to block consensus on this issue, despite the extensive consultation process this year. We thank Germany and Costa Rica for their leadership, and we encourage States to work constructively to explore ways to further enhance our engagement with civil society, and in the spirit of consensus.

Chair, the challenges ahead of us are broad and complex. It is more important now than ever that we work together to support the work of the Secretariat.

Thank you, Chair.

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