



**NEW ZEALAND**  
**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR SUSANNAH GORDON**  
**PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE OPCW**  
**AT THE 106<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Chairperson,  
Director-General,  
Distinguished delegates,

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa [greetings, greetings, greetings to you all].

Ambassador Andrés Terán Parral, New Zealand welcomes you as Chairperson and thanks you for your continued leadership. Director-General Arias, thank you for everything you do. You and your team have our full support.

Chair, I am honoured to address you today as New Zealand takes its seat as an Executive Council member. New Zealand has a long and committed history of fighting to end the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction, whether chemical, biological, or nuclear. Such weapons are inhumane, cause great suffering, and should have no place in our world.

You can expect a principled, constructive, and pragmatic approach from the New Zealand delegation. As Council members, we look forward to playing a full part in our collective work toward achieving a world free of chemical weapons. The Chemical Weapons Convention is the world's most successful disarmament treaty. We cherish the great strides that this Organisation has made in contributing to a safer and more peaceful international environment.

Chair, as we take our seat on this Council, we recognise there are many security challenges facing the world. For instance, we remain gravely concerned at the situation in Gaza. The humanitarian catastrophe and the civilian cost of the war is harrowing. As this conflict enters its ninth month, the risk of it spreading to the wider region cannot be discounted.

Chair, New Zealand has not forgotten that, as we address you today, Russia continues to wage war on Ukraine following its illegal invasion of that country. New Zealand unequivocally condemns Russia's aggression, and its fundamental disregard of international law. We note with grave concern the growing number of reports of riot control agents and chemical weapons use by Russia in Ukraine, and we call on Russia to answer to these allegations without delay or obfuscation.

New Zealand continues to call upon the Syrian Arab Republic to comply with its obligations as a State Party to the CWC and to cooperate with the Technical Secretariat in resolving all outstanding issues. This is an obligation, not only to other States Parties, but to the international community, and to Syria's own citizens and victims of chemical attacks.

The use of chemical weapons, by anyone, anywhere, any time and under any circumstances, is a violation of international law. It is the obligation of all states to uphold these laws, including those I have just mentioned.

Chair, we have heard claims that the OPCW is becoming politicized. Our view is that holding states to account for breaching the Convention is our duty, not an act of politicisation. The alternative - of watching in silence while the international norm against chemical weapons deteriorates - is unacceptable. The best way to avoid politicisation is for all States Parties to strictly comply with their Convention obligations.

Chair, technological developments relevant to chemistry have broader implications for the future of our organisation. We need to consider these carefully. We should continue to monitor new developments, including advances in fields such as artificial intelligence, and we need to adapt and strengthen the implementation of the Convention in response. In this regard, we also note with concern the use, and threat of use, of chemical weapons by non-state actors. This threat is real, and we must continue to address it.

Chair, in times of challenge, it is more important than ever to preserve space for diverse voices. New Zealand recognises the important role that civil society plays - be it academics, NGOs or industry experts - in improving the quality of our work and providing independent, outside voices.

We also welcome the voices of smaller states and will continue to advocate for a multilateral system that is inclusive and listens to all countries in equal measure. We all have a part to play in standing up for peace and security in our interconnected world. A threat to any of us is a threat to all of us.

Chair, if you would indulge me, let me finish with a traditional New Zealand proverb:

“Nā tō rourou, nā taku rourou ka ora ai te iwi.”

In English this means “with your food basket and my food basket, the people will thrive.” This speaks to the idea that we can't do this work alone. We all have a contribution to make to ensure we achieve the task at hand. New Zealand is ready, and looks forward, to making our contribution as a member of this esteemed Council over the next two years.

Ngā mihi [thank you].

We kindly request that this statement be considered an official-series document of the 106th Session of the Executive Council and made available on Catalyst and the OPCW's public website.