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NORWAY

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR ANNIKEN R. KRUTNES
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF NORWAY TO THE OPCW
AT THE SIXTEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairman,

Let me first congratulate you on the election as chair of the Sixteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Many important issues need our attention, and we are certain that you will guide us to a satisfactory result in the days to come.

Norway has aligned itself with the EU statement. I would, however, like to highlight a few issues of particular importance to Norway.

The Chemical Weapons Convention is indeed a cornerstone of the international disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. It has established fundamental norms on disarmament and non-proliferation, and hence continues to be a crucial instrument in reaching a world free of weapons of mass destruction. It makes and will continue to make an important contribution to peace and security. Norway will stay committed to the full and effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention globally, preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons and the misuse of toxic chemicals.

Since its entry into force fourteen years ago, the Convention has proved to be a successful multilateral tool. Almost three-quarters of the declared chemical weapons stockpiles have been destroyed, while most of the former production facilities have been destroyed or converted into peaceful purposes. Yet, we must recognise that more efforts are needed to ensure that the Convention meets its full potential. We are concerned that the two major possessor states have indicated that they will not be able to meet the extended destruction deadline. We urge the states, that still have stockpiles, to do their utmost to complete destruction in the shortest time possible. At the same time, all states parties have a joint responsibility to find constructive and pragmatic ways forward to agree on a decision regarding the final extended deadline of 29 April 2012, and to ensure that the Convention is not left at a stalemate.

Verification is one of the comparative advantages of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Efficient and credible verification is crucial for upholding its authority and relevance. Industry verification is a core activity of the OPCW. In this regard we believe it is important to continue to focus on other chemical production facilities (OCPF). We also need to ensure that the mechanism of challenge inspections is fully operational. In that regard, we also urge



all states parties to submit complete and accurate declarations to the Technical Secretariat, the very basis for validating compliance.

Mr Chairman, let me take the opportunity to express our support to the proposed budget by the Director-General for 2012. The budget takes note of the current economic climate, requiring a great deal of financial discipline. At the same time, it has a balanced approach to programmes and activities, taking into account both the verification and assistance dimensions of the Convention.

I would also take the opportunity to thank Director-General Ahmet Üzümcü for initiating a process on the future priorities of the OPCW through an International Advisory Panel. The report that was presented earlier this year by the International Advisory Panel and its Chairman, Ambassador Ekeus, gives valuable and important recommendations. We look forward to further discussions on the future of the OPCW.

Full adherence to Article VII is essential to facilitate cooperation in the field of peaceful chemical activities as set out in Article XI. An integral and important element of the Convention is economic and technological development through cooperation in the field of peaceful chemical and biological activities.

In this respect, Norway firmly believes that all nations will gain from improved non-proliferation efforts at national level. We believe that implementation of UN Security Council resolution no. 1540, particularly improved national non-proliferation measures, can help facilitate the implementation of Article XI of the Convention, rather than causing constraints, since it will help shape favourable conditions for cooperation and transfer of knowledge and technology.

However, we recognise that some countries need assistance with national implementation. We have also seen that many countries have found such assistance useful. Against this backdrop, we would like to commend the Technical Secretariat for the crucial support it is providing. We are pleased to inform you that we will continue to support the Africa Programme, which provides assistance with the implementation of the Convention and enhancement of national capabilities in relation to Articles VII, X, and XI of the Convention.

Mr Chairman, finally, let me also take the opportunity to reiterate that the use of chemical agents not prohibited by the Convention, such as riot control agents, must not undermine the norms set by the Convention and that such use must not have unacceptable humanitarian consequences. We recognise that there are different views on this issue, but we should try to explore ways to find common ground.

In conclusion, Norway would like to emphasise the importance of engaging civil society in the promotion and implementation of the Convention. Advancement in the field of disarmament and arms control can only be achieved if states listen to, learn from and include strong voices from civil society that advocate change.

Finally, I would like to request that this document is issued as an official document of the Sixteenth Session of the Conference. Thank you.