



STATEMENT

by

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of Chemists and Chemical Engineers

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Your Excellency, Mr. President, Mr. Chairperson,
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am particularly pleased for having this honour to address the 20th Jubilee of the Croatian Meeting of Chemists and Chemical Engineers. As its co-sponsor, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons fully supports the goals of this historical event. Indeed, the rich agenda of this Conference will contribute to the further development of the chemical science and industry that underpins the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Allow me to take this special moment to express my deep gratitude and that of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to H. E. Mr. Stjepan Mesić, the President of the Republic of Croatia for his invaluable support and for accepting to grace this important forum with his presence. We are honoured to have you with us Mr. President, and your presence here today speaks volumes of your long commitment and that of your country to the use of scientific research and development for the promotion of international peace and security.

I would also like to emphasize how happy I am to be back in Croatia, a country which maintains an exemplary cooperation with OPCW. I wish to thank Dr. Đurda Vasić Rački, Chairman and Dr. Nikola Šegudović, Vice Chairman of the Croatian Society of Chemists and Chemical Engineers for the marvellous work done in the organisation of this Conference and for the kind invitation they extended to me. As the Director General of the OPCW, I am profoundly grateful for the opportunity to meet such a distinguished group of participants.

The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) is privileged to be associated with this 20th Jubilee, dedicated to two outstanding personalities from Croatia who had made significant contributions to the field of chemical research and engineering. Nobel Laureates Vladimir Prelog and Leopold Ružička will always be remembered for the innovations and achievements they brought to the field of chemistry. In a way, the mission and objectives of the OPCW were inspired by the work and ideas of these two quintessential scientists of our time. The need for ethical standards to ensure that science, particularly chemi-

cal research is dedicated solely to the progress and well-being of humanity, should remain the ultimate guide for scientific inventions and discoveries.

The importance of scientific research was long recognised by the Framers of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). In order to allow the Organisation monitors scientific advancements, especially in the area of chemical research, the CWC established a Scientific Advisory Board (SAB), consisting of independent scientists and experts from OPCW Member States. This auxiliary body of the OPCW, monitors and continually reviews scientific and technological developments that could affect the operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, and helps the Organisation to constantly adjust to new developments. It also serves as a mechanism for active interaction with the scientific community. I am happy to note here that Croatia is represented in this body.

Mr. Chairperson,

This Conference is taking place at a critical juncture of the history of the OPCW. This year we celebrate ten years of the entry into force of Chemical Weapons Convention that embodies the vision of a peaceful world free from chemical weapons, by outlawing some of the most despicable toxic and poisonous weapons of war. The CWC is a unique instrument, which remains one of the greatest accomplishments in multilateral disarmament negotiations. Never before had sovereign States voluntarily accepted to give up an entire category of defense arsenal. To match words and commitment with actions, the Convention further establishes the OPCW as an international organisation or a watchdog to monitor and verifiably ensure States' compliance. The Convention makes it a criminal offense for States or non-State entities to be involved in the manufacture, development, production, transfer, possession and use of chemical weapons.

The universal condemnation and rejection of chemical weapons is evident in the growth in membership of the OPCW. There were 87 States Parties when the Convention entered into force on 29 April 1997. Today, that figure has more than doubled, and 181 countries representing over 90 % of world population and more than 98 % of all chemi-

cal industries world-wide, are now actively implementing the Convention. Fourteen countries however, remain outside the legal remit of the Convention and some of them continue to ward off the issue of joining and linking their decision to regional crisis or conflict. But as I have often said, the Chemical Weapons Convention was designed to apply to both war and peacetime. It is, in my view, even more relevant to regions in crisis because of its in-built transparency and confidence-building measures. I therefore urge countries in the Middle East and others which have not done so in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean to join the CWC without further delay.

Universal membership of the Convention is not just an issue of quantity or numbers but also the qualitative application of the Convention. The effective implementation of the Convention can only be assured with all countries on board. The OPCW has not spared any efforts in shouldering its responsibilities for achieving the goals of the Convention.

In the ten years of its operation, the history of the OPCW reveals a success story.

- Membership has more than doubled from originally 87 to 181 Member States. The OPCW remains the fastest growing, multilateral disarmament organisation in the world;
- Six countries (Albania, India, Libya, Russian Federation, United States and an unidentified State Party) have declared over 71 million tonnes of chemical agents and 8.67 million munitions or containers and 65 chemical weapons production facilities;
- A total of 16,604 million tonnes or just over 23 % of the declared stockpile have been verifiably destroyed. Over 2.6 million munitions or containers have been destroyed and 39 or 60 % of the Chemical Weapons production Facilities have been verifiably destroyed and 18 others converted into peaceful purposes;
- More than 2,700 inspections have been conducted in 76 countries and that number continues to rise on daily basis.
- 100 % of former CW production facilities have been inactivated.

We may welcome these developments with satisfaction, and indeed, look forward with optimism, but we are fully aware of the enormous challenges that lie ahead. I can assure you of the full dedication of the Technical Secretariat to work with Member States to achieve the goals of the Convention. Excellence will remain our minimum expectation. The OPCW will continue to be a shining example in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

As we prepare to mark the 10th anniversary of the entry into force of the CWC, the need to redouble our efforts is even greater and more urgent. The 2007 is the year that the Convention had called for the total destruction of all stockpiles of chemical weapons. The 10th anniversary will therefore offer us an opportunity to take stock of our achievements and challenges, as well as define the way forward for accelerating the goals of the Convention. The OPCW plans to mark the 10th anniversary in a special way. A Solemn ceremony is being planned for the 9th of May which will conclude with the unveiling of a memorial dedicated to all victims of chemical weapons.

One of the major challenges we face in the implementation of the Convention in the 21st century is the advancement in

science and technology and the development of new chemical compounds. At the same time there is also the rapid expansion of trade in chemicals, which make the task of verification and inspection more challenging.

The OPCW must be able to adapt to the changing realities of our scientific world so that the verification regime can be more effective in preventing the proliferation of chemical weapons and the materials for making them, without intruding or in anyway impeding the development of chemical industry intended for purposes not prohibited by the Convention. This challenge has become much more urgent since non-state actors; particularly terrorists are constantly seeking for the ability to produce or acquire chemical weapons in order to fulfil their sinister goals and eventually to inflict mass casualties. They must not be allowed access to these toxic compounds. In this context, scientists and chemical engineers such as many of you gathered here today must increasingly play an important role to prevent the abuse of chemistry.

Scientists, engineers, and business people in the field of chemistry must do everything necessary to prevent potential terrorists from making and using these weapons. In that context, the OPCW together with the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry are pursuing a chemical education and outreach project, which seeks to establish general ethical principles and a code of conduct for the scientific community dealing with chemistry. The Code of Ethics is meant to become part of the university and post-graduate curricula in chemistry.

This is also the underpinning objective of our deepening partnership with the Croatian Society of Chemists and Chemical Engineers for them to play the same role. We are also strengthening cooperation and partnership with regional institutions. In this context, the OPCW has been organising joint activities with the Regional Arms Control Center (RACVIAC) which is located here in Croatia. Barely 10 days ago, RACVIAC and the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW co-organised a very successful workshop, aimed at providing practical skills for responding to different emergency scenarios involving Chemical-Warfare agents or toxic industrial chemicals. The workshop constituted part of OPCW's ASSISTEX programme and effort to strengthen regional preparedness and protective capacity-building against chemical weapons.

We must remain committed to the goal of achieving in the near future, a chemical weapons-free world. Future generations must be made aware of their responsibilities as scientists and engineers when dealing with materials that could present a danger to humankind. Scientists must develop norms that will stand the test of time to sustain the chemical weapons ban in the consciousness of all those that deal with these materials. I therefore call on this 20th Jubilee to give further reflection on the subject and to consider steps for future cooperation with the OPCW.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate my appreciation to the government of Croatia for its commitment to the implementation of the CWC and its active role in the OPCW. I would like to reassure the government of OPCW's continued support and full cooperation in our joint endeavours to achieve common ends.

I wish the 20th Jubilee success.

I Thank You

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