

CWC Review Conference Report

The second day: continuation of the General Debate

The second day of the Third Review Conference for the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) saw a continuation of the General Debate for the entire day. Chair of the Conference Ambassador Krzysztof Patulej (Poland) called for presenters to keep their statements to 10 minutes as had been agreed beforehand.

A selection of photographs taken during the Review Conference is available via the OPCW's photostream <<<http://www.flickr.com/photos/opcw/>>>. There is also a Twitter hashtag #cwrc3 relating to the Review Conference.

General Debate

Statements were given in the following order: Yemen, United Kingdom, Mexico, Philippines, Costa Rica, New Zealand, Switzerland, Belarus, Russia, Tunisia, France, Algeria, Hungary, Republic of Korea, Lithuania, Oman, Belgium, Fiji, Turkey and Ukraine. After lunch, the statements continued with: United States, Canada, Germany, Romania, Panama, Indonesia, Ecuador, Croatia, Slovakia, Laos, Guatemala, Kenya, Zambia, Bolivia, Ireland (national capacity), Australia, Zimbabwe, Uruguay and Japan. Where copies of statements have been provided by those who delivered them, the OPCW will place these on its website at <<<http://www.opcw.org>>>. By Tuesday night, many had already been uploaded.

The level of representation was high with a significant number of the statements being made at ministerial or other senior political level. Examples included the UK, Turkey, the USA, Canada and Germany.

Common themes

A number of themes emerged amongst the thirty statements given on Tuesday. This analysis also includes points in statements given on Monday unless referred to in yesterday's daily report. Further statements are expected to be given during Wednesday. Other General Debate themes, for example, the post-destruction era and national implementation will be examined in a forthcoming daily report.

Universality – Many statements called for universal membership of the CWC.

Syria investigation – A number of statements urged the Conference to reach a significant or serious response to the situation in Syria; terms such as 'grave concern' were aired. Some statements expressed support for a prompt investigation into all of the allegations that had been the subject of investigation requests. Others were more specific; Russia, for example, indicated that the investigation requested by the government of Syria should be carried out as soon as possible, echoing the call by Iran on Monday. Calls were made for Syria to join the CWC and destroy any stockpiles under international verification. References were made to the government of Syria being bound by the 1925 Geneva Protocol which prohibits the use of poison gas in war. The USA suggested that the 'situation in Syria constitutes a serious threat to peace and security'. Canada noted it had offered a contribution of \$2 million to the OPCW to support provision of assistance to the UN Secretary-General's investigation activities.

Article XI – Some states promoting Article XI issues expressed the view that the article should not simply be seen as a safeguard to ensure that measures to restrict potential

hostile uses of relevant materials do not impinge upon peaceful activities but should be seen as a positive effort to promote peaceful cooperation. A number of states saw the decision by the Conference on the States Parties on 'Components of an Agreed Framework for the Full Implementation of Article XI' as a solid foundation. Several statements supported the Article XI action plan proposal.

Incapacitants – There were a number of calls that the Review Conference should examine issues relating to the use of toxic chemicals for law enforcement and in particular the issue of incapacitants. References were made to the 'general purpose criterion', the principle embodied within the Convention that all toxic chemicals (and other artifacts associated with hostile uses of chemicals) are prohibited unless they are held for a permitted purpose, and in types and quantities consistent with that purpose. Switzerland, which has proposed text for possible inclusion in the final document suggested 'the risks of inaction are far greater than the benefits of keeping the current uncertainty'. The UK stated 'unequivocally' that it neither holds, nor is developing, any incapacitating chemical agents for law enforcement purposes and urged other countries to state their positions. The USA raised the issue of incapacitants from another angle, noting that concerns had been raised that a programme for such agents for use in law enforcement could be used to conceal a programme to acquire these for other purposes and stated that the general purpose criterion [without naming it] would still apply. There was no mention in the US statement as to whether that country possessed incapacitants for law enforcement purposes. Germany stated it only holds chemicals for law enforcement purposes that fall within the definition of riot-control agents [i.e., no incapacitants].

Other specific points from statements

Russia called for remaining reservations to the 1925 Geneva Protocol to be withdrawn. France called for more work of the OPCW to be carried out in French. Lithuania raised the issue of sea-dumped chemical munitions and proposed that the OPCW be used as a forum for voluntary discussions and cooperation on the issue. Japan noted it had submitted a national paper giving details of destruction of chemical weapons abandoned on the territory of China.

Side events

Four side events were held on Tuesday, the first, before the start of formal proceedings, was held in the Ooms Room in the OPCW building was the launch of a report by the EU Institute for Security Studies <<<http://www.iss.europa.eu>>> entitled 'The future of the CWC in the post-destruction phase' with presentations by chapter authors Jean Pascal Zanders, Ralf Trapp, Richard Guthrie and Scott Spence (in lieu of Yasemin Balci) and by Ambassador Jacek Bylica, Principal Advisor and Special Envoy for Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, European External Action Service.

Three events were held at lunchtime, all in the OPCW Building. One, convened by the International Committee of the Red Cross <<<http://www.icrc.org>>>, was on 'Assistance and protection against chemical weapons: ICRC's humanitarian perspective' with presentations by Neil Davison and Gregor Malich and chaired by Kathleen Lawand, all of the ICRC. Two were convened by the delegation of Germany. The first was the opening of an exhibition on 'Destruction of Old Chemical Weapons in Germany' which was addressed by Ambassador Eberhard Schauze (Germany). The second was a meeting on 'Twenty years of German-Russian cooperation in the destruction of chemical weapons' which was addressed by Rolf W Nickel, Commissioner for Disarmament (Germany).

This is the third report from the Third Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention which is being held from 8 to 19 April 2013 in The Hague. They are prepared by Richard Guthrie of CBW Events for the CWC Coalition, a global network of non-governmental groups with an interest in the Convention. The reports are available at <<<http://www.cbw-events.org.uk/cwc-rep.html>>>. The author can be contacted during the Conference on +31 623 426 072 or <<richard@cbw-events.org.uk>>.