

# CWC Review Conference Report

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## Completion of the General Debate and the start of the thematic review

The third day of the Third Review Conference for the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) saw completion of the General Debate in the morning, with an additional session in which non-governmental organizations (NGOs) addressed the plenary meeting. The afternoon saw the first part of the themed review of the Convention.

### **General Debate**

Statements from States Parties were given in the following order: Sri Lanka, Paraguay, Senegal, Nigeria, Kazakhstan, Morocco, Afghanistan, Cameroon and Mongolia. Two were given by international organizations: the International Committee of the Red Cross and the African Union. In total, 69 statements had been given during 670 minutes of General Debate, a significant increase on the 50 statements in the previous Conference in 2008. [*Erratum*: report no 3 suggested there were thirty statements on Tuesday, but listed thirty-nine delegations. The list was correct, the error was entirely the author's in the editing process.]

This the second part of the thematic analysis of the General Debate. The themes of universality, Syria, Article XI and incapacitants were outlined in the previous daily report.

*Chemical weapons destruction* – A number of statements noted the importance of destruction deadlines and expressed regret that they had not been met, with some expressing recognition of the efforts taken in destruction so far. The Iran/NAM statement suggested 'the issue of destruction should be the primary focus of the Third Review Conference'.

*The post-destruction era* – The resultant institutional restructuring was widely recognised as a significant challenge. This will have many consequences for resource allocation, for staffing, for training and the maintenance of skills including institutional memory. Many references were made to the work of the Advisory Panel on future priorities that reported in 2011.

*Industry verification* – There were calls for efficiencies in inspection activities. The Republic of Korea noted that only 52 States Parties allow sequential inspections for Other Chemical Production Facilities (OCPFs) and that this practice reduces the number of inspector days needed.

*Threats from terrorism* – A number of statements noted the threat posed by terrorist or criminal groups using toxic chemicals for hostile purposes, and some connected it specifically with the issue of effective national implementation.

*National implementation* – A number of States Parties indicated improvements they had made in national implementation, from new laws to new enforcement activities and to additional activities of national authorities. There was widespread recognition that more needed to be done overall on national implementation. Positive lessons were being learned on assisting implementation efforts through activities such as regional workshops, regional centres and other means of capacity building.

*S&T advances* – there was recognition of a need that the Convention should keep pace with scientific and technological developments. The work of the Scientific Advisory Board was highlighted. Issues such as the challenges posed by the convergence between chemistry and biology and the importance of education and outreach were raised.

## **NGO session**

For the first time at a CWC Review Conference, NGOs were given the opportunity to address a plenary session. The session was opened by the Chair of the Conference, Ambassador Krzysztof Paturej (Poland), who described the decision for greater NGO participation as a 'landmark'. OPCW Director-General Ahmet Üzümcü welcomed the 'pioneer effort' as a step forward in NGO engagement and said he looked forward to 'valuable and constructive inputs'. Paul Walker (Green Cross International), as co-ordinator of the CWC Coalition, provided some introductory remarks for the session. Statements were given in the following order: Citizens' Advisory Commission (USA); Society for Chemical Weapons Victims Support (Iran); Institute for Security Studies (South Africa); Okan University (Turkey); Centre for Non-Proliferation and Export Control Issues (Kyrgyzstan); International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons; Verification Research, Training and Information Centre (UK); International Center for Chemical Safety and Security (Poland); Green Cross Russia; Bradford Non-Lethal Weapons Project & Omega Research Foundation (UK); Research Programme on CBW, PUC Institute of International Relations (Brazil); Global Green USA; and NPS Global Foundation (Argentina). At the end of the session, the Chair was presented with a gavel by Ryszard Scigala, President of ICCSS and Mayor of Tarnow, Poland.

## **Review of the operation of the Convention**

The review started with a presentation of the work of the Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) by its Chair, Ambassador Nassima Baghli (Algeria). She noted that the group had held 33 meetings since being established in May 2012 and that consultations had been held with industry stakeholders and with civil society. She reflected that the group had found that there were more convergences than divergences in the run up to the Review Conference and had been able to adopt a paper by consensus.

The rest of the afternoon was devoted to the review of the first two points under agenda item 9: '(a) the role of the Chemical Weapons Convention in enhancing international peace and security and in achieving the objectives as set forth in the preamble of the Convention' and '(b) ensuring the universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention'.

Particular issues raised included how the situation in Syria should be reflected in the final report of the Conference – owing to the acknowledged chemical weapons capability and the allegations of use, the situation raised grave concerns for many delegations. Russia argued that as a non State Party, Syria should not be judged by the same criteria as States Parties. Others emphasised a view that the overarching purpose of Convention was the elimination of all chemical weapons and that Syria needs to be mentioned as anything else would undermine the credibility of the Convention. Questions were raised about whether all eight non States Parties should be treated the same in the final report or whether there were distinctions between them that would warrant different treatment. Regrets were expressed that the meeting on a Middle East WMD-free zone had not been held as scheduled.

## **Side events**

Four lunchtime side events were held on Wednesday. Two were held in the OPCW Building with Green Cross International and the CWC Coalition convening a meeting on 'Achieving CWC universality: the future' and the International Dialogue on Underwater Munitions, together with Lithuania and Poland, convening one on 'Sea-dumped chemical weapons'. The other two were held in side rooms of the Convention Centre, with Japan convening a meeting on 'Japan's ACW destruction project in China' and Switzerland convening one entitled 'Swiss proposal in incapacitating chemical weapons for the Third Review Conference'.

*This is the fourth 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](mailto:richard@cbw-events.org.uk)>>.*