



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Twenty-Eighth Session
27 November – 1 December 2023

C-28/DG.21
27 November 2023
Original: ENGLISH

**OPENING STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL
TO THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES
AT ITS TWENTY-EIGHTH SESSION**

1. I welcome all delegates to the Twenty-Eighth Session of the Conference of the States Parties.
2. I thank the outgoing Chairperson, Ambassador Vusimuzi Madonsela of South Africa, for his excellent leadership of the Conference and the General Committee during this past year. Ambassador Madonsela, the significant time and effort you have devoted to your tasks as Chairperson has been profoundly appreciated by all of us, including the members of the Secretariat and myself.
3. I congratulate Ambassador Suljuk Mustansar Tarar of Pakistan on his appointment as the new Chairperson of the Conference. Ambassador Tarar, this Conference will benefit from your extensive experience in multilateral diplomacy, and I assure you of the Secretariat's full support in your new role.
4. We are meeting at a time when the international security environment is worsening. The last session of the Conference, and the Fifth Review Conference, took place in the shadow of the ongoing war in Ukraine. This session convenes nearly two months since the start of the hostilities between Israel and Palestine. These developments place the spotlight once again on allegations of use of weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons. The degraded geopolitical environment, and the threats associated with the misuse of new and emerging technologies, have heightened the risk of the re-emergence of an abhorrent method of warfare.
5. I wish to recall that all 193 States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention have made a solemn commitment to never develop, produce, acquire, stockpile, transfer or use such weapons. I urge all States Parties to strongly maintain this commitment.
6. Despite these difficult times, the OPCW has in the past 12 months witnessed an impressive set of achievements. In January, we commemorated the thirtieth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Convention in Paris. In May, we inaugurated the Centre for Chemistry and Technology (ChemTech Centre) in the presence of H.M. Willem-Alexander, King of the Netherlands. A few days later, States Parties convened for the Fifth Review Conference to evaluate the Convention's operation and its implementation status, as well as to set priorities for the coming years. The common ground found during the review process serves as useful guidance for the States Parties in their consultations, and has been helpful to the Secretariat in its ongoing adaptation.

7. On 7 July, we marked the completion of the elimination of all declared chemical weapon stockpiles, 26 years after entry into force of the Convention. The United States of America finished the destruction of all its remaining Category 1 chemical weapons stockpiles, with the last munition destroyed at the Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant in Kentucky. A total of 70,494 metric tonnes of Category 1 chemical weapons, 1,811 metric tonnes of Category 2 chemical weapons, and 417,833 items of Category 3 chemical weapons have been destroyed under the Secretariat's robust verification. This amounts to a total of more than 72,000 metric tonnes of chemical weapons destroyed.
8. Also recently this year, the First Committee of the General Assembly at the United Nations adopted the annual resolution on Convention implementation tabled by Poland. This document reaffirms its strong support for the OPCW and expresses its deep appreciation for the Organisation, and states that the Convention constitutes a major contribution to international peace and security. The draft resolution will be submitted to the General Assembly for its consideration before the end of the year.
9. Building on these contributions to peace and international security, the Organisation has been intensifying its focus on preventing re-emergence. It is also expanding its international cooperation support to States Parties in national implementation and assistance and protection activities, while developing the highest levels of expertise. Over the intersessional period, the Secretariat also carried out its existing work, in addition to monitoring and responding to new and emerging risks and opportunities.
10. Universality of the Convention is one of the top priorities. Full implementation of the Convention will not be possible until all States have signed and ratified it. Since the last session of the Conference, the Secretariat has redoubled its efforts by trying to engage with all four States not Party.
11. In particular, it has intensified its contacts with South Sudan. I wish to highlight that South Sudan was present at the inauguration of the ChemTech Centre, as well as at the Fifth Review Conference. In October, I met in Algeria with the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of South Sudan, Mr James Pitiya Morgan. At that meeting, the OPCW and South Sudan signed a joint communique, in which we agreed to work together to complete the accession process as soon as possible. Universality bears an existential significance for the Convention. Efforts of the international community to ban completely chemical weapons would have no effect if they do not apply to all States in the world.
12. Despite our progress, we cannot take the global norm against chemical weapons for granted. As I mentioned earlier, use and allegations of use continue. This worrying situation underlines the need for increased vigilance. It further shows the critical role of the policy-making organs in addressing any alleged or proven violations of the norm. It also underlines the need for the Secretariat to maintain and enhance its expertise and capability to respond to requests.

13. The war in Ukraine is a worrying case. The Secretariat has been delivering support to Ukraine, upon its request, in the field of assistance and protection. Of the EUR 2.19 million received from States Parties for assistance to Ukraine, EUR 1.48 million has already been committed. These contributions have allowed the Secretariat to assist Ukrainian first responders by:
 - (a) launching different courses on emergency response to incidents involving toxic chemicals;
 - (b) acquiring a significant quantity of protective, detection, and identification equipment; and
 - (c) preparing specialist training on the use of this equipment.
14. The Secretariat stands ready to implement its support to Ukraine further, pending the completion of the legal procedures in Ukraine. In the meantime, we continue to monitor the situation and stand ready to further assist as appropriate.
15. We are also monitoring the conflict in Gaza, and any allegations of use of chemical weapons that could arise. We are in contact with both sides, as you will have seen from letters shared with all States Parties. The Organisation stands ready to assist if requested, in accordance with the Convention.
16. These serious developments occur at a time when the world is faced with unprecedented rapid advancements in science and technology and their related risks.
17. Technologies are converging or being readily transferred from one sector to another. Artificial intelligence (AI) constitutes a typical example of an evolving technology, where opportunities and threats co-exist. In its report to the Fifth Review Conference, the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) noted that AI is a cross-cutting technology, with an unparalleled flexibility of applications across scientific disciplines, including in the fields of chemistry, drones, robotics, and biotechnologies, to name a few.
18. AI is accelerating progress in chemistry and related fields, in addition to making associated processes cheaper, faster, and more effective. In particular in research and development, AI is being leveraged to design new chemical compounds and materials. Drug discovery, a traditionally complex, expensive, and time-consuming process, is being revolutionised by AI. AI could help design, and subsequently screen, large numbers of new chemicals, with the aim of identifying drug candidate molecules of interest. Laboratory robots, using AI technology, can more easily than before synthesise chemicals, accelerate their development, ease their production, augment productivity, and increase safety. By leveraging its powerful ability to predict data, AI has also been used to generate critical information related to newly scheduled chemicals. This includes physical properties, toxicity, hydrolysis rates, and chemical analysis data. This information is especially useful, considering the knowledge gaps on these chemicals identified by the SAB. This data may inform decisions on protection, decontamination, and remediation following a chemical incident.

19. Unfortunately, together with these advantages, the risks are also obvious. AI can be used to identify novel pathways to produce chemical warfare agents, avoiding in this way the use of known precursors and circumventing the schedules on chemicals, thereby undermining verification. As the SAB also cautions, AI combined with unmanned platforms available on the market for permitted purposes, such as fertilisers or insecticides for agriculture, also poses a threat of being used for chemical weapons delivery purposes. The reality is that the ease of access to these technologies, alongside their relatively low cost, increases the danger of toxic chemicals being employed for malicious purposes.
20. The Secretariat is developing an internal road map on how AI will impact the implementation of the Convention, which will serve as a guide for future discussions and possible decisions. The ChemTech Centre will bolster the Secretariat's ability to stay abreast of scientific and technological developments, through training, research, and access to the most modern equipment. Accordingly, the Secretariat will require further relevant expertise, knowledge, and equipment, to tackle the fast evolution of these novel technologies.
21. The SAB's contribution in this and other more traditional areas of science will remain indispensable. During the intersessional period, the SAB adopted a report by the Temporary Working Group on the Analysis of Biotoxins. Biotoxins are toxic chemicals, usually obtained from biological source materials. In addition, and upon the SAB's recommendation, I have established a new Temporary Working Group on Chemical Forensics to begin its work early next year. The objective of this Temporary Working Group is to review the science and technology relevant to chemical forensics, and in doing so, to identify gaps and challenges, enabling the OPCW to make best use of the information chemical forensics can yield.
22. I also wish to underline the importance of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism, as the dedicated platform for all States Parties to address this subject. Under the chairpersonship of Ambassador Madonsela of South Africa, the Working Group met three times this year. Last week, it held a table-top exercise, the outcome of which will provide guidance for its future activities.
23. The Secretariat is exploring additional tools and approaches for prevention and deterrence of chemical terrorism. Notably, we are boosting our international cooperation programmes devoted to assistance and protection and to enhancing national implementation of the Convention. To date, 128 of the 193 States Parties have adopted legislation that comprehensively implements their obligations. This is six more States Parties than in 2022, which is a significant increase.
24. CHEMEX Africa took place in Algiers last October. The event was co-organised by Algeria and the OPCW and financed by Canada. It was the first ever pan-African chemical emergency response capacity-building exercise. The two-week exercise enhanced the preparedness of 80 first responders from 33 African States Parties to manage and respond to complex chemical emergencies, including those originating from non-State actors. This event illustrates the Secretariat's approach to supporting States Parties in reducing the risks of toxic chemicals being used as weapons.

25. Beyond this major exercise, the Secretariat delivered, during the intersessional period, a total of 82 capacity-building activities, benefitting 2,103 participants from all five geographical regions. Thirteen of these events used the ChemTech Centre as a platform. These include:
- (a) a course for analytical chemists from laboratories supporting customs services, held this month;
 - (b) the first in-person training on investigation of incidents involving toxic industrial chemicals, held in September; and
 - (c) a basic analytical chemistry course for women chemists, held in July.
26. The Secretariat has further utilised the ChemTech Centre for Inspectorate training, as well as for laboratory exercises and proficiency testing. The Centre is also generating benefits by achieving cost efficiencies through its remote training capabilities. It enhances the quality of services to States Parties owing to its modern training facilities. In addition, it increases opportunities for deepening our partnerships with scientists, academia, and other experts.
27. The Draft Biennium Programme and Budget for 2024–2025 includes new programmes that will leverage the Centre’s capabilities and assist in realising its high potential. I seize this opportunity to recognise the States Parties’ vision demonstrated through your financial contributions and support since the beginning of the ChemTech Centre project. With the completion of the construction, transition, and enhancement phases, we will close the trust fund dedicated to the creation of the Centre.
28. I am pleased to announce the establishment of a new trust fund that will be dedicated to financing the capacity-building, training, and research activities to be undertaken at the Centre. This new trust fund will be necessary for the OPCW to respond to the challenges that are well known. I encourage States Parties in a position to do so to contribute to this common endeavour.
29. Turning to the verification regime, it remains a fundamental tool for our prevention and deterrence efforts. So far this year, the Secretariat has completed 166 inspections, and expects to complete a total of 194 inspections by the end of the year, against the planned 200 inspections. This limited shortfall is mainly attributable to planning and logistical constraints related to sequential inspections.
30. To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of industry inspections, since May the Secretariat has been implementing a new technology known as the eINS software. This system generates standardised preliminary finding reports during Schedule 2 and Schedule 3 inspections and inspections at other chemical production facilities (OCPFs). A total of 45 OCPF and five Schedule 3 inspections, across 17 States Parties, have been concluded using this software during the pilot phase.

31. At the Fifth Review Conference, there was a common understanding that the current verification regime can and should be improved. It should be adapted to the evolution of science and technology, and to trends in the chemical industry, namely:
 - (a) the growth in its scale and complexity;
 - (b) the expanding number of industrial sites that use Schedule 2 chemicals; and
 - (c) the geographical distribution of production sites.
32. I welcome ongoing discussions by States Parties within the Industry Cluster on these matters, and the progress achieved on two issues specifically: the backlog of Schedule 2 inspections and the so-called future “tipping point”—that is, the drastic drop in the number of States Parties with uninspected OCPF plant sites.
33. States Parties agreed to adjust the frequency of inspections at Schedule 2 plant sites, based on their risk assessments. This adjustment will eliminate, in a year or two, the current backlog of Schedule 2 inspections resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and should address future industry growth. States Parties also agreed to adjust the selection methodology for OCPF plant sites over the coming year, to fully address the policy guidelines for determining the number of Article VI inspections.
34. For its part, the Secretariat continues to adapt to the end of destruction of declared chemical weapons stockpiles. The Inspectorate Division is already altering its structure to reflect the evolution of its missions, considering the completion of the chemical demilitarisation process. It is doing so while maintaining a unique body of international experts in a wide range of fields. In the meantime, our work continues in verifying the destruction of non-stockpiled chemical weapons, and former chemical weapons production facilities.
35. Regarding chemical weapons abandoned by Japan on the territory of China, as at 31 October 2023, a total of 110,189 items of abandoned chemical weapons (ACW) had been recovered, of which 83,705 had been destroyed. The destruction of ACW by Japan on the territory of China has continued based on the “Destruction Plan Beyond the Year 2022 for the Chemical Weapons Abandoned by Japan in the People’s Republic of China (as Per Decision EC-67/DEC.6, Dated 15 February 2012)”, which was adopted at the 101st Session of the Council (EC-101/DEC.2, dated 4 October 2022). The Secretariat remains in close contact with China and Japan regarding the latest developments on ACW matters. From 31 October to 4 November 2023, one inspection at a storage facility was conducted by the Secretariat. China and Japan continue to be in close communication regarding the next phase of the programme of work.
36. Since the last session of the Conference, old chemical weapons inspections were conducted at sites in Belgium, Germany, and Italy.
37. Furthermore, a total of 97 chemical weapons production facilities were declared by 14 States Parties since entry into force of the Convention. Seventy-four of these facilities have been destroyed, while the remaining 23 have been converted for purposes not prohibited by the Convention. As at 31 October 2023, nine converted facilities continue to be under verification. Four of the facilities are subject to on-site inspection, and five are subject to data monitoring.

38. We tackle these tasks alongside the work in relation to the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. It has been 10 years since the Syrian Arab Republic joined the OPCW. Despite the destruction of all declared chemical weapons-related facilities, as well as 1,300 metric tonnes of chemical warfare agents declared by the Syrian Arab Republic, our work is ongoing.
39. On the occasion of the 10 years of the Syrian Arab Republic's accession to the Convention, the Secretariat prepared and shared with the States Parties a Note dated 27 September 2023 (S/2213/2023), which covers the challenges faced in ensuring the Syrian Arab Republic's compliance with its obligations. It outlines what has been done beyond the destruction I just mentioned, such as the 17 amendments that the Syrian Arab Republic has provided so far to its initial declaration as a result of the work of the Secretariat. The Note also shows what has yet to be completed for the Syrian Arab Republic and provides points for consideration by States Parties in this regard. The Syrian Arab Republic has failed to declare the production and fate of substantial quantities and types of chemical warfare agents. It has also failed to properly declare large quantities of aerial bombs, specifically designed to carry chemical warfare agents. Additionally, some chemical weapons-related facilities, and relevant activities, have not been declared or fully declared.
40. During the intersessional period, through the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), the Secretariat continued its efforts to ensure that all declaration-related obligations and requirements for the Syrian Arab Republic are met. Between April 2021 and October 2023, the Secretariat attempted to organise the twenty-fifth round of consultations between the DAT and the Syrian National Authority. These attempts remained unsuccessful because of visa and other limitations and conditions placed by the Syrian Arab Republic. During that period, the Secretariat proposed several alternatives, including deployments of a reduced team of the DAT, to conduct limited in-country activities (LICA) in the Syrian Arab Republic. During these activities, the DAT conducted interviews and site visits and collected samples, but did not hold any technical meetings. In June 2023, a higher-level meeting between delegations of the Secretariat and the Syrian Arab Republic was held in Beirut, Lebanon. The Syrian delegation committed to present to the Secretariat a proposal with a view to better implementing its obligations, which the Secretariat is still awaiting.
41. In October, after two and half years of delays, the Syrian Arab Republic finally decided to issue visas to all DAT members, and the twenty-fifth round of consultations was held in Damascus between 30 October and 5 November 2023. It took two and a half years for the Syrian Arab Republic to accept that consultations are the only possible way forward to resolve outstanding issues. The Syrian National Authority committed to provide new elements, such as amendments to the initial declaration and/or scientifically plausible explanations for several outstanding issues.
42. In addition, the Syrian Arab Republic also committed to provide explanations related to the latest results of the analysis of samples collected in April 2023. These samples were taken at two sites in the presence of Syrian experts. Their analysis revealed the presence of chemicals not related to the declared activities. Last week, on 23 November, the Syrian Arab Republic provided several documents related to its initial declaration, as discussed during the twenty-fifth round of consultations. These elements are being translated and reviewed by the Secretariat.

43. So far, a total of 24 outstanding issues have been raised and reported by the Secretariat since 2014, of which only four have been resolved. The substance of the remaining 20 issues is serious, as they involve large quantities of potentially undeclared or unverified chemical warfare agents, and chemical munitions. In addition, the Syrian Arab Republic has yet to complete any of the measures specified in paragraph 5 of the Council decision adopted on 9 July 2020 (EC-94/DEC.2). Considering all the issues that remain unresolved, the Secretariat assesses that the declaration submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic still cannot be considered accurate and complete.
44. Pursuant to paragraph 11 of the Council decision adopted on 11 November 2016 (EC-83/DEC.5), the Secretariat has conducted a total of nine rounds of inspections at the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC). The Secretariat is also following up on several issues arising from these inspections, including the presence of a Schedule 2.B.04 chemical in the samples collected in November 2018, and the presence of a large quantity of a dual-use chemical at the SSRC Barzah facility observed during the ninth inspection (in September 2022).
45. In June 2023, the Secretariat issued a report by the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria (FFM) on the alleged use of toxic chemicals as a weapon in Kharbit Massasneh, on 7 July and 4 August 2017. The report was shared with the States Parties (S/2186/2023, dated 28 June 2023). It concluded that the information obtained and analysed did not provide reasonable grounds for the FFM to determine that toxic chemicals were used as a weapon in the incidents that occurred in Kharbit Massasneh, in the Hama Governorate, on 7 July 2017 and 4 August 2017. Since the last session of the Conference, the FFM has carried out four deployments to collect further information, on which States Parties were briefed on 8 March, 3 July, and 28 September of this year. The FFM is currently working on allegations that have been assessed as credible, analysing information collected from deployments conducted by its team, and preparing for upcoming deployments. The Secretariat will report on the allegations under investigation in due course.
46. The Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) continues to make progress on its investigations to identify the perpetrators of several incidents of use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. On 27 January, the Secretariat published the third report of the IIT, as document S/2125/2023. The then Coordinator of the IIT and I briefed States Parties about this report on 2 February, and on 7 February we provided a briefing to the United Nations Security Council. The third report of the IIT sets out the findings of the investigations of the chemical weapons incident that took place on 7 April 2018 in Douma, the Syrian Arab Republic.
47. On the basis of all the information obtained and analysed, the IIT concluded that there are reasonable grounds to believe that between 19:10 and 19:40 (UTC +3), on 7 April 2018, during a major military offensive, aimed at regaining control of the city of Douma, at least one Mi-8/17 helicopter of the Syrian Arab Air Force, departing from Dumayr airbase, and operating under the control of the Tiger Forces, dropped two yellow cylinders, which hit two residential buildings, in a central area of the city. Forty-three named individuals were killed, and dozens more were affected. According to its mandate, the Secretariat is preserving and sharing information with the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM), established by the United Nations General Assembly. The IIT is further working on ensuring the transfer of knowledge acquired to other relevant units of the Secretariat.

48. I recall the decision adopted by the Conference of the States Parties in April 2021 entitled “Addressing the Possession and Use of Chemical Weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic” (C-25/DEC.9, dated 21 April 2021), which suspended certain rights and privileges of the Syrian Arab Republic. The Conference decided that these rights will be reinstated once I have reported that the Syrian Arab Republic has completed the requested measures adopted by the Executive Council in July 2020 (EC-94/DEC.2). To date, the Syrian Arab Republic has not completed any of these measures. I wish to emphasise that all the mandates related to the Syrian chemical dossier, conferred by the Convention and decisions of the policy-making organs, remain binding on all States Parties, as well as on the Secretariat. It is up to you, States Parties, to ensure that the Secretariat has the means to carry out its mandated activities. It also falls on the policy-making organs to ensure that the Syrian Arab Republic fulfils all its obligations.
49. In the difficult context in which we operate, the Secretariat has delivered on its mandates. Nonetheless, sustaining the delivery of world-class services requires adequate resources, both human and financial, commensurate with the realistic and very substantive agenda that the Secretariat must implement.
50. In this respect, the Draft Revised Programme and Budget of the OPCW for 2024–2025, recommended by the Executive Council, is submitted for adoption by the Conference. Its implementation will define the success of the Organisation over the next two years. I thank States Parties for your active engagement in this vital process, and I acknowledge the outstanding efforts of the co-facilitators, Mr Frank Groome of Ireland and Mr Jerzy Gierasimiuk of Poland. The Draft Revised Programme and Budget reflects a temporary reduction in the mandated level of Article VI inspections. It also includes proportionate reductions in other operational and support activities to minimise the financial burden on States Parties.
51. It is anticipated that these reductions in activity in 2024–2025 will constitute an exceptional and temporary measure, as it will follow similar measures adopted in the 2022–2023 Programme and Budget that were necessary for the recovery from the impacts of COVID-19. In addition, the Programme and Budget proposal also includes the partial replenishment of funds for the enhancement of physical security at the Headquarters building. It is now up to States Parties to ensure that the Secretariat can function fully in its role of facilitating the implementation of the Convention in the next 2024–2025 biennium.
52. Full functionality for carrying out our common work depends on the States Parties and on the Secretariat staff. We must ensure that we can continue to attract and retain a capable, committed, and diverse workforce through adequate human resources management. The Secretariat is functioning with the lowest-ever number of fixed-term staff in its history. As at 31 October, only 362 of the 464 approved posts had been filled. As I have reported to you previously, more than three quarters of the tenure-based staff who were employed by the Secretariat in January 2021 will have left by the end of 2023. This situation is not sustainable. You must find ways to guarantee that the Organisation has at its disposal the talent that it requires to deliver. This can only happen if you provide sufficient financial support and if you adopt the necessary measures.

53. Along these lines, I note with appreciation the establishment of a facilitation on a possible more flexible tenure policy by the Executive Council last July. I sincerely acknowledge the work of the co-facilitators in this process, Ambassadors Susannah Gordon of New Zealand and Elizabeth Ward of Panama, and the engagement from all States Parties. I call on States Parties to maintain this constructive engagement, as you consider the much-needed draft decision on tenure policy during this session of the Conference.
54. Similarly, I welcome the progress made by the Working Group on Geographical Representation, also established by the Executive Council last July at its 103rd Session. Under the leadership of Ambassador Jaime Moscoso of Chile, this Working Group has accelerated discussions on this theme and has proposed a draft decision which, if adopted, will allow substantive progress.
55. Another item before this session, following the recommendation of the Executive Council last October, is the OPCW's potential membership in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF). I wish to underline that my responsibility for the duty of care for all categories of staff, and for ensuring the overall interests of the Organisation, remains the priority in this regard. The Secretariat must have in place a comprehensive social security framework, as required under international administrative law. An adapted tenure policy, a shared responsibility for ensuring that the Secretariat receives enough applications for all the positions, and a responsible social framework together will help us to face the difficulties I just mentioned.
56. I witnessed in my interactions with senior officials in my recent visits to the United Arab Emirates, Algeria, Qatar, and Finland that interest in and support for the work of the Organisation is high. The OPCW must live up to the high bar it has set from 26 years of achievements, and as a Nobel Peace Prize laureate. The legacy of the Nobel Peace Prize continues with the OPCW–The Hague Award, established in 2014 together with the city of The Hague. Today, at 12:45 here in this hall, the award will be presented to three worthy recipients who have made commendable contributions to our common task.
57. Subsequently, on Wednesday, 29 November at 9:45am, we will observe the annual Day of Remembrance for All Victims of Chemical Warfare with a moment of silence and respect. I seize this opportunity to remind States Parties of the International Support Network for Victims of Chemical Weapons and of the Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Chemical Weapons, both established in 2011 by the Conference of the States Parties. I thank Austria and Andorra for their contributions to this important fund this month, and I invite States Parties in a position to do so to consider donating.
58. These testing global times require decisions and actions from the policy-making organs, in particular the Conference, as the highest decision-making body. We owe it to the international community and to the victims of chemical weapons who have placed their trust in us, and to the future generations.
59. I assure the Conference of the dedication and professionalism of the Secretariat.