

**SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA, HON. MIKE
MULONGOTI, MP. AT THE 11TH CONFERENCE OF STATES
PARTIES TO THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION
THE HAGUE-THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS, 5TH-8TH
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Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of my delegation and indeed the Government of the Republic of Zambia, I wish to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of this 11th Conference of States Parties. I am confident that under your wise leadership, the Conference will be successfully concluded.

May I also take this opportunity to recognize and salute the outgoing Chairman, Ambassador Jose Antonio Arrospe for his indisputable excellent service during his Chairmanship of the Tenth Conference of States Parties. I also wish to congratulate the newly elected Bureau members of this 11th Session of the Conference.

I also wish to join other delegations to express our gratitude to the Director General, Mr. Rogelio Pfirter for the explicit presentation of his detailed report which shall immensely facilitate the deliberations of this Conference. I also wish to pay tribute to the Director General and the OPCW Secretariat for the warm reception accorded to me and my delegation since our arrival to this beautiful city which also holds a unique place in the history of the fight against Chemical Weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Zambia, Mr. Levy P. Mwanawasa (SC) and the Government, I wish to reaffirm our commitment to general and complete disarmament. It is in this regard that

my President sent a delegation to this Conference as a means of supporting international efforts at addressing this worrisome issue. Mankind must redeem itself by saying no to weapons of mass destruction. We must make the world a safe place for ourselves and for the future generation.

Mr. Chairman,

My Government recognizes the need for universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention and for this reason Zambia became a signatory State to the Chemical Weapons Convention on 13th January 1993 and subsequently ratified the same on 9th February 2001. By doing so, Zambia joined many other nations in the global effort towards the prohibition of chemical weapons. Chemical weapons are indeed of great concern for the international community, as they are Weapons of Mass Destruction that can be used by terrorists, including irresponsible individuals. As you may be aware, it was at this Conference where the agreement to abstain from the use of projectiles, whose object was the dissemination of harmful gases was arrived at. However, this did not prevent the use of chemical weapons for warfare during the First World War. Zambia in this regard welcomes the newest States Parties to the Convention.

As a member of the African Union (AU) and Non Aligned Movement (NAM) and indeed the United Nations (UN) family, Zambia is proud to stand by the positions made at these levels of multilateralism with regard to the CWC. We shall therefore continue to work hand in hand with our colleagues in ensuring that general and complete disarmament is an achievable dream.

Mr. Chairman,

You will remember that in 1925, the Geneva Protocol prohibited the use of asphyxiating, poisonous and other gases or bacteriological methods in warfare. It however, did not forbid the development, production, stockpiling or deployment of chemical and biological weapons nor did it provide mechanisms for dealing with violations. That is the reason why negotiators were driven towards the final treaty that eventually led to the success of the United Nations negotiating Conference on the Convention on Chemical Weapons in Paris, France in January, 1989. Suffice to say that in February, 1993, when the Convention was opened for signature, Zambia was among the first countries that signed.

Mr. Chairman,

Zambia is in the process of domesticating the Convention; the bill will be tabled before Parliament for enactment early next year. In the same vein Chairperson, I wish to state that while we shall domesticate the Convention, there will be need to build capacity of our personnel to be able to deal effectively and decisively with all matters related to this dangerous phenomenon. It is in this regard that I wish to pledge my Government's support for all programmes that will be made available to it by the Technical Secretariat in order to strengthen our capacities to deal with any possible occurrences.

Mr. Chairman,

As a developing country, Zambia attaches great importance to chemical science for its development. As such we support all efforts that will promote the peaceful uses of chemicals to the benefit of our people who are in dire need for answers to their economic problems. We in Zambia will remain open to any efforts that will be directed towards achieving our development agenda in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

It is a well appreciated fact that OPCW has offered technical assistance to Member States, including Zambia, with respect to the implementation obligations of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Zambia wishes to thank the European Union through the OPCW for the donation of analytical laboratory equipment worth 100,000 Euro to the Zambia National Authority. My Government is happy that the OPCW has also expressed willingness to assist in the training of personnel to run the laboratory. We are confident that the OPCW will continue rendering its assistance, in all the other areas that will ensure successful implementation of the CWC programmes. Mr. Chairman, in the spirit of international cooperation, Zambia is willing to work out modalities through the OPCW to make the facility accessible in the region.

Chairman,

Africa is a crucial factor in international cooperation, more so with issues of collective international agreements. It is in this regard therefore, that I also wish to state that for the full and effective participation of Africa in realising the obligations States have set themselves under the Convention, there is need for the OPCW to look into the even distribution of employment opportunities for its African partners. I am therefore confident that there will be more meaningful participation from the African Region when more of its citizens are involved in the day to day operations of the OPCW. The employment of more Africans in the Organisation will only further strengthen Africa's commitment in the realisation of the objectives intended under the CWC.

Mr. Chairman,

As we are all aware, the Chemical Weapons Convention mandates the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to eliminate the scourge of chemical weapons for good and to verify the destruction of the declared chemical weapons stockpiles within the stipulated deadlines. In this regard, Zambia has therefore observed with satisfaction, the spirit in which negotiations to implement the CWC have been conducted. We appreciate that it is due to this spirit of magnanimity and cooperation that there has been considerable success in implementing the Convention. We therefore strongly plead that the spirit of persuasion should continue in order for us to build on the gains we have made so far. The idea of instituting sanctions on those who have not yet complied with the requirements may

retard that progress, unless they are intended to coerce those deliberately resisting the requirements as stipulated under the Convention. We are convinced that the world has shown collective resolve on the matter and there is need to therefore continue to support this collective spirit and wisdom. I know there is impatience towards achieving this necessary objective, but we must be mindful that there is more to be achieved through persuasion than through confrontation.

Mr. Chairman,

The Government of the Republic wishes to echo the concerns expressed by other delegations about the current pace of the destruction process. We salute those States Parties whose commitment to the destruction of the chemical weapons stockpiles has been demonstrated by their zeal in meeting the agreed set deadlines i.e. 2012 and it is hoped that this final deadline will be strictly observed.

I want to conclude by saying my Government acknowledges the very important fact that domesticating the Chemical Weapons Convention will enhance Zambia's security and therefore, enhance our national and global interests.

Despite the fact that Zambia does not manufacture and does not possess chemical weapons, the Zambian Government recognises the great importance of enacting the legislation for the following reasons:

Firstly, since one of the objectives of the OPCW is to promote international cooperation in the peaceful uses of chemistry, Zambia also stands to benefit in this regard through the transfer of technology, material and equipment for peaceful purposes in the chemical field.

Legislation will also create a national legal framework for the State to effectively implement the provisions of the Convention. In this regard, I wish to mention that my Government will be more than willing to cooperate with the OPCW in facilitating the proposed SADC regional training workshop for customs officials some time next year. I am therefore personally eager to hear what proposals the OPCW has for hosting this workshop.

Lastly, let me reaffirm Zambia's commitment to efforts to strengthen the global efforts to adhere to the CWC. We believe that we are part of the greater family of nations determined to preserve mankind and ready to advance peace and security for all. This can be assured by eliminating all those weapons that threaten the future of mankind.

I thank you.