

AGENCY FOR THE
PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR
WEAPONS IN LATIN AMERICA
AND THE CARIBBEAN



General
Dist.

S/Inf.945
7 November 2005.

XIX Regular Session of the General Conference
Santiago, Republic of Chile, 7-8 November, 2005.

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Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very grateful for the opportunity to address the XIX Regular Session of the of the General Conference of Organization for Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and Caribbean (OPANAL) on behalf of the Organization for Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

OPANAL has an exceptional record of continuous and systematic activities in promoting the provisions of TLATELOLCO Treaty making the region of Latin America and Caribbean free of nuclear weapons. Both OPANAL and OPCW, implementing agencies of two extremely important international treaties in the field of disarmament, share the same noble goal to bring about a world freed weapons of mass destruction and a total ban on these weapons through international treaties.

OPANAL represents all states in the region of Latin America and Caribbean united in the struggle to ensure, inter alia, the absence of nuclear weapons and contribute to the nuclear non proliferation. OPCW for its part implements the Chemical Weapons Convention whose aim is to rid the world of the entire category of weapons of mass destruction. By now 175 States have voluntarily renounced these weapons and are firmly committed to work together to prohibit the use, development, production, stockpiling and trading in chemical weapons. In doing so they are also contributing to the worldwide struggle against terrorism.

The full and effective implementation of the Convention limits terrorist access to the materials that could be used as chemical weapons. Most of the countries from the Latin America and Caribbean are part of the CWC and contribute significantly to the activities of OPCW. We welcome coming on board this year of Grenada, Honduras, and Antigua and Barbuda. We are convinced that remaining states not parties, with which we have a continuous communication and dialogue, will soon join the CWC.

It's especially important when we have in mind the OAS General Assembly Resolution 2000 (XXXIV-O/04) from 8 June 2004 calling for the establishment of the Americas as a biological- and chemical- weapons free zone. We would like to use this opportunity to ensure the remaining states not parties of the readiness of OPCW to extend its help and support on every step on their way to become the part of the OPCW family. Allow me, in that context to remind that sub-regional Workshop on Universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention will be held in St. Lucia, on 28-29 November 2005, to which all states not parties are invited.

Mr. Chairman,

OPCW Member States are obliged by the Convention to ensure that no one – and that includes terrorists – is able to use toxic chemicals as weapons. Of course, such a regime can become a success only if the Convention is adhered to by all States, and that all States stringently enforce its provisions. All States that join the Convention are under permanent obligation to make relevant declarations to the OPCW, and to accept on-site inspections at chemical weapons- related and industrial sites and facilities. The Convention also requires them to provide assistance and protection should any other Member State suffer, or be threatened by, a chemical weapons attack, as well as to foster the peaceful uses of chemistry in the interests of economic and technological development.

The recently staged “Joint Assistance 2005” exercise has been planned and coordinated jointly by Ukraine, the OPCW and NATO’s Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC) offered an invaluable opportunity to refine and enhance the OPCW ability to move swiftly and coordinate effectively the assistance and protection any state party may request if attacked by chemical weapons or if their use is threatened. Delivering assistance and protection following a chemical attack or to asses such a threat is a complex, resource-intensive task that can

only be adequately sustained by most governments through international cooperation. Here the OPCW offers a real security dividend for all member states.

In order to effectively implement the CWC provisions, the First Review Conference, held in 2003, adopted two Action Plans: on Universality and Implementation. The OPCW Action Plan foreshadowed by a year UNSCR 1540, dealing with the threat of terrorism, which in turn created a binding obligation upon all U.N. Member States, be they OPCW Members or not, to enact the legislation necessary to create an interlocking web of systematic declarations, industrial monitoring, chemical transfer controls and regulatory measures that identify and track the chemicals of concern.

So we can say that significant progress has been made on a number of fronts, and considerable momentum is being generated in the implementation of the Convention. However, huge tasks and challenges remain before us – to meet the timelines for destruction envisaged by the Convention, to translate its operative provisions into an effective web of national laws and implementing authorities and arrangements, and to achieve thereby the highest level of assurance to which the Convention aspires.

Mr. Chairman,

Through the permanent interactions with representatives of states parties, international organizations and with civil society, it has become clear that the OPCW experience continues to be a positive highlight in the disarmament world. In order to foster such effective cooperation, the OPCW has identified several areas of joint activities with regional and intergovernmental organizations:

- information exchange and participation on each other's relevant training courses, workshops, seminars and exercises, particularly in the field of WMD and counter-terrorism
- raising political awareness and acting as a vehicle to deliver political messages regarding the universal application and full and effective implementation of relevant international legal instruments
- exchange of technical advice and information, in accordance with applicable confidentiality policies

We believe that the OPCW presence here today is a telling example of mentioned international cooperation.

Mr. Chairman,

Before concluding, I would like to congratulate the Chairman and Vice-Chairman on their election. I wish also to extend our sincere gratitude to the Government of Chile for an excellent organization of this Conference. Allow me to close this brief overview of the most important activities of OPCW by conveying the message by the Director General of the OPCW, Ambassador Rogelio Pfirter with his best wishes for the success of this Conference. We believe that the continuous promotion of universality and full compliance with the CWC's stipulations, as well as increased cooperation among states parties and a range of international and regional organizations is the most effective way for the OPCW to contribute to the ongoing struggle to create a safer world.

Thank you.