



**TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES TO
THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION**

**Remarks by Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu
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Mr. Chairperson,
His Excellency, Director-General Fernando Arias,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am delighted to address the Twenty-Fourth Session of the Conference of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

At the beginning of this month, we had the pleasure to welcome Director-General Arias to New York to brief the Security Council on the work of the OPCW. On that occasion, I expressed my appreciation to Director-General Arias and this organization for its tireless efforts to uphold and reinforce the taboo against the use of chemical weapons. Moreover, I would like to take this opportunity to once again underscore Secretary-General Guterres' full confidence in the professionalism, objectivity and impartiality of the work of the OPCW and to thank Director-General Arias for the longstanding partnership and cooperation with the United Nations that has now been institutionalized on multiple fronts.

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), adopted by the Conference on Disarmament in September 1992, is a central pillar of the global disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. Today, 193 Member States are party to this instrument and 97 per cent of the world's declared stockpile of chemical weapons has been verified as eliminated, thanks to the hard work of the OPCW and its staff.

Yet, despite the progress made in the implementation of the Convention and the important steps taken towards universality, our work is far from complete. The world is not yet free of chemical weapons and, worryingly, the international norm against chemical weapons has been repeatedly challenged by their use, with impunity, in the Syrian Arab Republic.

I join with the rest of the international community in condemning the use of these inhumane weapons and in expressing my regret that they have not yet been consigned to the pages of history. We cannot allow ourselves to become inured to the continued allegations of the use of chemical weapons in detriment not only of national, regional and collective security, but our very humanity. It remains imperative to ensure that those who use chemical weapons are identified and held accountable. The Security Council, as guarantor of international peace and

security, must act to fulfil its responsibility to end impunity of these atrocious acts. Only then we will be able to restore the damaged norm against chemical weapons.

Mr. Chairperson, Excellencies, Director-General Arias,

I take this opportunity to reaffirm the Secretary-General's support to all efforts to strengthen the Chemical Weapons Convention and its institutional capacity. I appreciate there are different perspectives among some Member States, but I encourage you to engage in dialogue between each other and with the OPCW Secretariat to ensure the full implementation of all decisions adopted by Conferences of States Parties, including decision C-SS-4/DEC.3.

The work of the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) established in compliance with this decision to identify perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic should be supported and access to the Syrian Arab Republic should be granted to the IIT without restrictions or impediments to perform its mandate.

In closing, let me echo the Secretary-General's remarks at the Security Council last year:

“Ensuring accountability for a confirmed use of chemical weapons is our responsibility, not least to the victims of such attacks. A lack of accountability emboldens those who would use such weapons by providing them with the reassurance of impunity. This in turn further weakens the norm proscribing the use of chemical weapons and the international disarmament and non-proliferation architecture as a whole”.

Let us all support the Chemical Weapons Convention and its essential work to build a safer, more secure world for all.

Thank you very much for your attention.