

Secretary-General Underscores Immense Value of ‘Effective’ Chemical Weapons Convention in Message to States Parties Nineteenth Session Conference

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Secretary-General Statements and Messages

Following is UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon’s message, as delivered by Angela Kane, United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, to the nineteenth session of the Conference of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, at The Hague, 1 December:

I am pleased to send greetings to the nineteenth session of the Conference of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

The events of the past year highlighted the immense value of the Chemical Weapons Convention as an effective, comprehensive and non-discriminatory instrument to verify the destruction of existing stockpiles of chemical weapons and to prevent their proliferation.

The historic mission to eliminate Syria’s chemical weapon programme has been a key focus for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Some 98 per cent of Syria’s declared chemicals have been destroyed. The OPCW-UN Joint Mission has fulfilled its mandate and its operations ended on 30 September. Its work stands as an excellent example of how practical cooperation between international organizations can achieve tangible results that advance the disarmament agenda. The OPCW mission is finalizing arrangements for the destruction of remaining chemical weapon production facilities, and continues to clarify aspects of Syria’s declaration.

One hundred and ninety Member States are now party to the Chemical Weapons Convention. I am heartened that 85 per cent of the world's declared stockpile of chemical weapons had been verified as destroyed as of 30 September this year.

I commend the OPCW for fostering international cooperation, particularly in the pursuit of chemistry for peaceful purposes. This contributes not only to broader disarmament objectives, but also to global economic development. It also builds trust and confidence in the effectiveness of the Convention.

Next year's commemoration of the centenary of the first large-scale use of chemical weapons during the First World War will allow us not only to reflect on their horrific legacy, but also to recognize how much we have achieved in the years since.

Yet our work is far from complete. I am profoundly disturbed at the continued allegations of the use of chemical weapons in Iraq and Syria. I categorically condemn the use of such weapons in any circumstances, and reiterate the urgent need for a world free of chemical weapons. Let us all support the Convention and its essential work of building a safer, more secure world for all. I wish you every success.

Disarmament

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