

STATEMENT OF CANADA

ELEVENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES

TO THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION

DELIVERED BY

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TO THE

ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS

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(CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY)

Canada 

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Director-General, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates and Honoured Guests:

I wish first, Mr. Chairman, to congratulate you on your election to your important office. Many participants in this forum witnessed the effective exercise of your considerable diplomatic skills during your recent Chairmanship of the Executive Council (EC). I know this Conference will benefit from your experience and talent. You can count on the full cooperation and support of the Canadian Delegation.

Canada continues to attach high importance to full and effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, which remains unique in its provision for a verified, comprehensive ban on an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. We attach special value to the work of the OPCW at a time when the importance and efficacy of multilateral arms control and disarmament agreements have in various quarters been called into doubt. As we approach the Tenth Anniversary of the entry-into-force of the Convention, there are grounds for both satisfaction and unease.

One specific cause for optimism is the impressive growth in our membership, including over the course of the past year. There are now 181 States Parties, exceeding the goal we set for ourselves at the last Conference. There nevertheless remain disturbing gaps in

our membership and we should sustain our collective efforts to move ever closer to universality of adherence.

Effective CWC implementation cannot be a matter simply of numbers; qualitative aspects of Convention implementation are crucially important. There are two main dimensions to this. First, each State Party must take timely and effective actions to comply with its obligations under the Convention. Second, there needs to be a well-managed and well-staffed Technical Secretariat which receives clear policy direction from the policy-making organs of the OPCW.

The obligation of chemical weapons possessors to declare and verifiably destroy all their chemical weapons stockpiles within specified time periods is a central provision of the Convention. All six declared chemical weapons possessors, through their declarations and their actions to initiate and implement verified CW destruction programs in cooperation with the Organisation, have convincingly demonstrated their bona fide intentions to meet their destruction obligations. Among the early-declared smaller possessors, there has been reassuring progress in the implementation of their CW destruction programs. In the two main possessor State Parties, destruction activities have proceeded apace in the past year. A notable acceleration of destruction activities in the Russian Federation is to be welcomed. However, the fact that, almost ten years after EIF, only about 20% of declared CW stockpiles have been destroyed is not reassuring. The requests of each of the two main possessors for a maximum extension of their final destruction

deadlines to April 2012, has understandably and properly elicited a sense of concern among Executive Council members. Canada would welcome positive Council recommendations on the extension requests, while also making provision for visits by EC delegations to CW destruction sites as a transparency measure.

Of course all States Parties, not just CW possessors, have important operational obligations under the CWC. For several years after EIF there was a disturbingly widespread and substantial shortfall by numerous States Parties in carrying out the important national implementation provisions specified in Article VII. This led the First Review Conference to initiate an Action Plan to bring about improved Article VII implementation. Implementation of the Action Plan and its follow-up under Executive Council oversight has been occasion for excellent and sustained cooperation between and among States Parties and the Technical Secretariat, which has resulted in some notable successes. In particular, the number of States Parties which have designated a National Authority has risen sharply to 95% of States Parties. It is nevertheless clear that additional encouragement and support to a significant number of States Parties could be of great value in further improving the implementation of Article VII provisions. Canada therefore welcomes the EC recommendation for an extension of follow-up activities to the Action Plan.

The verification provisions constitute the operational heart of the Convention and it is in this area that an effectively managed, technically competent and well-motivated Technical Secretariat is of

critical importance. The management leadership of recent years has brought a welcome stability and reliability to the Organisation's operations. A particular challenge in this context has been the implementation of the staff tenure policy decided in 2003. The recommendation before this Conference extending to 2012 an element of flexibility in the implementation of the tenure policy is in our view warranted, especially in order to ensure the continuing competence of the Inspectorate, and we trust it will be approved. Canada nevertheless remains anxious about the potential cumulative effects of ongoing implementation of the tenure policy. We hope that the Director-General will continue to report regularly to the Executive Council on the matter and that the policy-making organs will remain ready to take timely actions to make any warranted adjustments in the policy and its implementation.

Concerning the particular importance of maintaining the technical competence of the Inspectorate at a high level, I am pleased to announce that Canada expects this week to conclude a Memorandum of Understanding with the Technical Secretariat providing for an annual two-week live-agent training course for OPCW inspectors in Canada. Reflecting the policy value Canada attaches to its support to the OPCW, under the agreement Canada's Department of National Defence will provide the training at its Counter Terrorism Technology Centre at Defence R&D Canada, Suffield, on an incremental cost recovery basis, thus covering more than two thirds of the training costs.

I have mentioned the importance of clear and timely policy guidance from the policy-making organs. Regrettably, this has not been reliably forthcoming. We recognise that, given the diversity of our respective interests and priorities, agreement on important policy issues will not always be quick or easy. Nevertheless, there are some areas in which, collectively, we have lamentably failed to live up to the responsibilities the Convention requires of us. In particular, we are failing to develop and implement comprehensively the verification provisions of Article VI and Part IX of the Verification Annex. Specifically, Canada has been especially disappointed at our inability, despite years of effort, to reach agreement on policy decisions relating to low concentrations for Schedule 2A and 2A* chemicals and to a new site selection methodology for OCPF inspections. In each case, the absence of a policy decision means that an important element of the Article VI verification regime continues to be not properly implemented. In each case, we seem to have come close to a reasonable agreement. Canada urges a priority effort to reach closure on these two items in the coming year, to enable decisions at the next Session of the Conference.

The proposed Programme and Budget for 2007 offers more grounds for encouragement about our policy-making efforts. A second consecutive budget involving no nominal growth in financial allocations is welcome as an indication of financial restraint and the growing efficiency of the Organisation in its operations. Canada takes special satisfaction in an allocation of Article VI inspections with a significantly stronger orientation than hitherto toward OCPF

inspections. This reflects an increased, and overdue, readiness to learn from cumulative inspection experience so as to reallocate limited inspection resources to evolving inspection priorities.

To conclude, Mr. Chairman, effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention in all its aspects makes an essential contribution to international security. Canada therefore remains firmly committed to joining cooperatively with other States Parties to maintain and strengthen the OPCW as a strong and effective institution for that purpose.