

STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT OF THE OPCW, A MB.ROGELIO PFIRTER AT THE SYMPOSIUM: TOWARDS THE ELIMINATION OF THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS. ROLES OF THE OPCW AND JAPAN. United Nations University. Tokyo. 1 October 2003.

Allow me at the outset to say a few words in recognition of our distinguished hosts today. I would like to start by mentioning the presence and the contribution of H.E. Yukida Amano, Director-General for Arms Control and Scientific Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and his very efficient team. I wish also to highlight the presence of the Permanent Representative of Japan to the OPCW, H.E. Ambassador Hiroharu Koike, who is not only a distinguished and key player in all our negotiations in The Hague, but also a dear friend whose support and advice I cherish. I must also say how honoured I feel to be in the presence of such a distinguished group of panellists, including Professor Asada, from the Graduate School of Law in Kyoto, and Major-General Akiyama, who is nothing less than the former Director of the Inspectorate of our Technical Secretariat, and somebody whose cooperation I have not had the privilege to enjoy. But I know how much he has done for the OPCW and the Convention and I am glad to finally meet him. Last, but not least, let me also underline the presence of Mr Ere Haru, Head of our Training and Development Branch at the OPCW, who has been a driving force behind this visit and this symposium in particular.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me start by saying how pleased I am to be here.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the United Nations University and the Government of Japan for organising this symposium.

Its title in fact embodies the spirit of co-operation and joint effort that we always try to impress to all our activities. As indeed, both Japan and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons have an important

role to play in the process that will ultimately lead to the total elimination of this type of weapon of mass destruction.

I am confident to say that I feel that in this country our voice will be heard and our efforts supported, as Japan has made of the fight against proliferation of weapons of mass destruction a pillar of its own foreign policy. In her statement before the Fifty-Eight Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, Her Excellency Ms Yoriko Kawaguchi, Foreign Minister of Japan put it in unequivocal terms when she said: *"today, we face a situation in which the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the threat of terrorism affect not only particular countries or regions but the world as a whole, presenting a new threat to our lives and our livelihood. It is imperative for each country to regard the issue as its own and to take action in concert with the countries facing such imminent threats"*. The words of Ms Kawaguchi were wise and we must thank her for having said what we all know is so central to the real solution of this problem, as nothing will be possible in this area unless we all take our responsibilities and exercise our duties to the fullest extent.

Let me tell you how we are trying to comply with our own share of the challenge from the OPCW.

Our Organisation, as the Convention it upholds, has unique features.

We must be active in three different, but deeply interrelated fronts.

Disarmament, Non Proliferation and International Co-Operation in the Peaceful Uses of Chemistry are inseparable parts of our mandate, and we look after them with the same dedication and seriousness.

We verify disarmament. The actual destruction of existing stockpiles of chemical weapons.

This is essential, and establishes a qualitative difference between the Chemical and the Nuclear and Biological fields, where unfortunately, and due to considerations that exceed the scope of my presentation, we still lack the non discriminatory and comprehensive characteristics of the chemical weapons ban.

In this area we can therefore be optimistic, and although much remains to be done before we can proclaim our Planet entirely free from these heinous weapons, we have the legal instrument in place, and an Organisation fully equipped and up to the challenge.

A few months ago, in The Hague, the First Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention took place against the backdrop of an international situation characterised by doubts, uncertainties and a certain sense of pessimism in relation with multilateral efforts in particular in the area of disarmament and international security.

In spite of the fears and doubts, the States Parties to the CWC solemnly reaffirmed their commitment to achieving the object and purpose of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Most notably, the participants agreed to say that **the OPCW has established an effective international verification system based on declarations and on site inspections.**

When we look at the situation in the Biological field, or the difficulties surrounding the nuclear non proliferation regime, one values even more this world wide consensus in support the Chemical Weapons ban.

But self complacency is not in order.

Many difficulties lie ahead, and our programme of destruction and non proliferation still faces many challenges which we will only overcome through concerted action and a firm commitment.

Five Possessor States have come forward and declared their stocks, and our teams are permanently checking on behalf of the international community that their own commitment to destroy their weapons is being faithfully carried out. The United States and India have passed the first milestone in the road toward chemical disarmament by destroying 20% of their category 1 CW. The destruction campaigns in the two countries continue at a sustained pace. The US, the second largest possessor, is making steady progress and new destruction facilities are gradually being added to the ones currently in operation. Their campaign faces from time to time delays and needs to be rescheduled in view of the size of the task and also because of the environmental concerns of local populations which at some instances demand enquiries and checks before the destruction facilities get on with the business of incinerating or neutralising agents. We are confident that the US Government is making everything in its capacity to move forward in the destruction, within the timelines established by the Convention, which, as you know, sets a 10 year period which can be extended, if approved by the Executive Council of the Organisation, to a maximum of 15 years since the date of Entry into Force of the Convention.

Russia is the largest possessor of chemical weapons, with a declared stockpile of around 40.000 metric tonnes of CW.

After some initial delays, the Russian authorities have put together a cohesive effort and a realistic structure to eliminate the huge arsenal of agents and munitions. In April of this year Russia was able to complete the destruction of 1% of its category 1 CW, an amount which may seem modest to the external observer, but that beyond the actual figure proves the determination of the Russian authorities.

The international community, through various efforts, notably the Global Partnership and the "10+10+over 10" scheme is actively supporting the Russian programme and we, at the OPCW, provide the necessary and impartial view that countries around the world need to continue and to confirm their crucial support of the Russian efforts.

The vision of the world leaders in Kananaskis, is slowly bearing fruit, and the OPCW is there, ready to play its part as a guarantor of the exercise.

Our Disarmament activities are what make our efforts so powerful and emblematic.

And we will continue, as we know that until all the declared stocks are destroyed and certified as so, their dangerous shadow will still loom large over our collective horizon.

I always say that our Convention is a treaty for the future, and not only an instrument to get rid of an unpleasant heritage from the past.

This is why our efforts in the area of Non Proliferation are so important.

Key to the credibility of the Chemical Weapons Ban is the deterrent factor that our inspection system establishes for potential proliferators, be it at State or Non-State Actors level. The OPCW has already carried out more than 1500 inspections in nearly 60 countries. Nearly two-thirds of them have been at CW-related facilities in relation to existing stocks of weapons. But the parallel challenge of the elimination of the access to chemical weapons and their precursors is realised through our Industry Inspections regime. This regime is applied to the facilities that produce a range of chemicals that have peaceful applications, but could also be used for weapons purposes, for example, by international terrorists. Even if the provisions of the Convention must be implemented in a manner that avoids hampering the economic and technological development of the States Parties, we are fully conscious of the difficulties that industrial

inspections may pose, especially for a country like Japan, who is the second largest producer of chemicals after the United States.

But let me say that these constraints, real as they can be, are a small price to pay compared with the perspective of a world deprived of adequate controls and the open door to proliferators that such a scenario would entail. The contribution of industry is thus of the essence for the ultimate success of our efforts. This is why since my coming into office, a little more than a year ago, I have made a matter of priority to co-operate and listen to the views of industrialists and the private sector in general.

Chemical Industry understood, since the early days of the negotiation of the Convention, that they would also benefit from the seal of legitimacy and compliance with international and national law we provide. They rightly saw that Chemical production and trade would ultimately be affected and industry at large would run the unacceptable risk of being stigmatised and made responsible for chemical terror, were they not perceived as an active partner in the fight against weapons made with chemicals.

The issue, believe me, is not a theoretical one.

International terrorists will constantly seek access to means of mass destruction.

The chemical sector, unlike the nuclear or even the biological one, recognises such a wide world expansion that it will always be an obvious point of attraction for proliferators. So we must look at the chemical industry and also at the related aspects of peaceful chemistry like trade, where the declarations system of the Convention also apply and intends to discourage and make diversion of precursors to criminals significantly more difficult.

Japan's role in this has been exemplary and I wish to pay tribute to the zeal of your National Authority and the excellent disposition of Japanese industry. More than 50 inspections without a glitch are there to confirm the commitment this nation has shown to the cause of peace and security through disarmament.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

International terrorism is a reality. Japan experienced this phenomenon a few years ago.

Let me be very clear. We are not a counter-terrorism agency. But there is a contribution we can provide through the very simple exercise of our mandate. Chemical stockpiles are secured and inventoried by the OPCW, the destruction process takes place under our supervision. Signature of the CWC entails national implementation measures, including penal legislation, that act as a real deterrent. Transfers of listed chemicals are also subject to declarations. On the positive side, we assist member states in the development of their own protective capabilities.

International efforts to prevent acts of terrorism, especially those involving the use of chemical weapons must be done in coordination with other international organisations, starting with the United Nations, which has a central role as Foreign Minister Kawaguchi recalled in New York when she affirmed that *'no organisation can address issues as comprehensively as the United Nations'* I agree with her and in that spirit we are very actively cooperating with the Counter-Terrorism Committee established by the Security Council. We are playing our role in line with UNSC resolutions 1368 and 1373.

In this area we also have a lot to learn from Japan.

The lethal nerve gas attacks launched by the Aum Shinrikiyo cult, in the city of Matsumoto in 1994 and in the Tokyo subway in 1995, which led to a number of deaths and thousands of injured, came as a shock and at the same time a tragic reminder that chemical weapons could be used against unprotected civilians in public places. I am grateful to the organisers of our symposium for having invited representatives of the Japanese authorities who dealt with that emergency, and I invite them, through the National Authority of Japan, to share their experiences and the lessons learned in the process with our staff at the OPCW.

It takes a good deal of determination to organise and coordinate the forces and efforts of those around the world that can contribute in the fight against terror through weapons of mass destruction, but I can see now, through my contacts with other heads of International agencies and the Secretary-General of the United Nations himself, that there is a firm consensus and a commonality of views upon which we can build. The OPCW will play its part.

A treaty like the Chemical Weapons Convention cannot be entirely successful until it becomes truly universal.

We have made great progress. Today our membership reaches 156.

Indeed an impressive figure. But one that leaves outside some countries of concern, most notably in the Middle East.

North Korea also must be added to the list. We are encouraged by the promising start of the Six-Party talks process, and we are confident that through the concerted efforts of all parties progress will be made in the host of issues in the agenda.

As Director-General of the OPCW I cannot fail to mention the importance of finding an adequate way to incorporate chemical weapons into the process. In issues like those related to weapons of mass destruction there are not 'second priorities'. I would humbly recall that in the Korean Peninsula equation there is also a CW dimension that must be addressed without delay. As a major regional actor, Japan can play a central role in bringing North Korea closer to the CWC and the OPCW.

Distinguished friends,

The resolution of the question of the chemical weapons left by the former Japanese armed forces in China is of great and urgent concern for both countries.

I know that both parties share the expectation and goal of reaching an early resolution to this thorny issue. The recent incident involving these chemical weapons in China has once again increased the concerns of both State Parties. I know that you are dealing with this problem in an honest and straightforward manner. We at the OPCW stand always ready to cooperate and in fact this is what we do whenever the situation calls for our involvement. It is my sincere belief that the sooner the issue of ACW is closed, the better this will reflect upon efforts in disarmament and non proliferation.

Related to this, are the findings of Old Chemical Weapons in Japan.

I recognise the complexity of this issue and the considerations arising from local communities in urban areas, as well as the need for a good understanding between the Japanese authorities and the Technical Secretariat and its inspection teams.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you can see, the Chemical Weapons effort is a multidimensional one, where so many actors converge. From national governments, to international organisations, the private sector, non governmental agencies, there is a specific and well defined role for everyone.

Our Convention is not a simple one. It is ambitious. And complex.

It deals with agents and substances that make our daily lives possible, and better. But as Janus, the mythological god, there is another face to them, as in the wrong hands they can turn promise and good into destruction and evil.

Signing the Convention is just the beginning of a process that involves national measures, domestic legislation and the establishment of institutional mechanisms to make it all logical and operational.

In all these areas, Japan has played, and continues to play, a central role, and the international community is grateful for that. It is important, and legitimate, that the Japanese society at large, is made aware of the contribution their country is making for a world in peace. From its position as one of the largest contributors to the OPCW, to its faithful compliance with the Convention, without forgetting the generous voluntary contributions made to our modest budget, Japan is showing the way to others.

In the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Technical Secretariat that oversees compliance with it, the international community has a precious asset that needs to be protected and enhanced.

In the present world, where uncertainties and dangers abound, the chemical weapons ban is a reality, and it is up to us to make it stronger and efficient.

In so doing we will be protecting our civilisation from the scourge of weapons of terror that have no place in our world.