



## Statement to the Fortieth Session of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)

**Ambassador Eric M. Javits, Head of the U.S. Delegation**  
The Hague, The Netherlands  
March 15, 2005

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Director-General, Distinguished Delegates,

Let me begin by extending a warm welcome to all of you. In particular, Mr. Chairman, it is good to welcome you back for this, your final regular session as Chairman. I suspect you are happier than the rest of us that this is your last time in the chair. The Council has greatly benefited from your capable leadership over the past year.

We have a challenging and important year ahead of us, and so it is important that we use this first Executive Council session of 2005 to lay the foundation for effective action in pursuit of the highest goals and aspirations of the Chemical Weapons Convention. I pledge my support and that of the entire U.S. delegation to ensuring the success of this session.

The most urgent task facing this organization and its member states is achieving full national implementation of Article VII of the Convention. All recognized the importance of this task when we agreed to an action plan in October 2003. We were collectively determined to ensure that action was both prompt and effective; we therefore agreed that our goal was full implementation by the Tenth Conference of the States Parties.

Mr. Chairman, that deadline is now just eight months away. The United States considers this a real deadline, not just a vague goal. While progress has been made, much more needs to be accomplished to achieve the goals set by the Article VII action plan. The United States welcomes the designation of Legal Advisor Oñate as the focal point of Technical Secretariat activity in this area. His efforts, alongside those of the able Article VII facilitator, Ronald Münch of Germany, can contribute to ensuring that the necessary leadership and guidance is provided over the next few months.

Ultimately, each member state is responsible for meeting all of its obligations under Article VII of the Convention. We have all undertaken treaty obligations, and we must all make every effort to honor them. However, it is also clearly in everyone's interest to assist member states in achieving full national implementation. States Parties needing help in meeting their Article VII obligations should request assistance from the Technical Secretariat or other States Parties -- and do so in time for the necessary assistance to be provided prior to the Tenth Conference. Although we cannot and should not relieve a State Party of its responsibility, the Technical Secretariat (TS) and other States Parties can and should help.

The U.S. has undertaken a number of bilateral missions to assist specific countries in meeting their Article VII obligations, and more are being planned. In fact, the U.S. and the TS have a team working with Caribbean States Parties this week. Two weeks ago, a similar team worked with states in East Africa, assisting with the development of draft legislation, reviewing declaration requirements, and helping to develop national action plans to meet Article VII obligations. Experience shows that carefully prepared working sessions in capitals can be the most effective form of assistance. At this stage of the Article VII Action Plan, many more such bilateral visits are needed -- and needed during the next few months. Every State Party has a variety of agencies and departments affected by Article VII obligations, and this approach allows for work with all the key interlocutors. Member states that fall short of full national implementation do so in a variety of ways, for any number of reasons. By sitting down with the various officials involved in a particular member state, we have been able to provide very specific, tailored advice and support, rather than repeating generalities about the importance of Article VII or a generic summary of the relevant treaty obligations.

In addition, in cooperation with Romania, we have updated our Implementation Assistance Program on the basis of State Party comments received to date. We would like to thank the Romanian Government for establishing a website from which States Parties can download copies of the manual and software.

The U.S. has been encouraged by the numerous offers by member states to provide experts to assist in achieving national implementation. We urge those states that have not yet done so to identify specific individuals and areas of expertise as soon as possible to supplement the work of the Technical Secretariat. And we call on those who have not offered such support to consider whether they can make a similar contribution. Lastly, we urge the Technical Secretariat to focus its efforts on missions to individual States Parties, coordinating closely with the facilitator and interested member states to ensure that the right support is extended to the right countries. As we emphasized at the time of adopting the action plan, the achievement of full national implementation by all States Parties is of paramount importance to us all. The unanimous adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 in April 2004 highlighted the importance of adoption and enforcement of effective legal and regulatory standards to prevent proliferation of chemical weapons. Full implementation of Article VII requirements in accordance with the provisions of the Action Plan is the key to meeting these objectives of Resolution 1540.

Mr. Chairman, we have a number of other important issues to address in the coming week. We heard yesterday an update from Libya and Albania on the status of their work on eliminating their chemical weapons stockpiles. The U.S. has strongly supported the efforts of both countries to destroy their stocks, and welcomes their ambitious plans.

The examples of Libya and Albania highlight the importance of universal adherence to the Convention. In 2004, nine new States Parties joined the CWC. We hope and expect to build on that record of success in 2005. We strongly support the ongoing efforts of the Director-General and our diligent facilitator, Ms. Hela Lahmar of Tunisia.

Yesterday, many delegations also heard the report from Mr. Thomas Cataldo of the Department of Defense on the status of U.S. destruction activities. We have made copies of that detailed presentation available for delegations; if you have not received a copy, and want one, please contact any member of my delegation. That presentation, I think, makes clear that we remain on track in meeting our next major destruction milestone, which is to have 45% of our stockpile destroyed by December 31, 2007. As you all know, our final deadline has been extended "in principle." The U.S. will present its final CW destruction deadline request in accordance with the provisions of the Convention. We remain firmly committed to prompt, safe, and environmentally responsible destruction of our chemical weapons stockpile under international monitoring.

As I noted previously, it is important that we set the tone of our work for 2005 at this session. I would be remiss if I did not highlight the fact that we have no substantive industry issues ready for decision at this Executive Council, even though there are important decisions that need to be taken -- especially a selection procedure for Other Chemical Production Facilities. The initial U.S. proposal on site selection was made in 2002. The current Swiss-U.S. joint proposal was first put forward in 2003. We have been pleased with the recent increase in activity on this topic, but it is high time to move ahead. We are prepared to discuss site selection in the consultations, in small groups, or bilaterally, in The Hague or in capitals to better understand and address concerns. We see no reason why a decision should not be taken on site selection at the 10th Conference of the States Parties.

Additionally, this is the last meeting of the Executive Council before the deadline for submission of Annual Declarations of Past Activities for calendar year 2004. Therefore, I take this opportunity to remind all States Parties of the importance of submitting these declarations within the Convention timeline. As the TS reported last year, only 22% of States Parties submitted their 2003 declarations on time. This is simply unacceptable. We look forward to dramatic improvement this year, and will review the forthcoming TS report carefully.

Finally, I want to address some comments to the men and women of the Technical Secretariat. The United States recognizes and appreciates the leadership of the Director-General and his team in addressing many difficult management issues, and also the loyalty of all who work for, and make this organization run. We thank you all for performing in the face of many challenges.

Mr. Chairman, this week, we will make decisions, address immediate concerns and lay the foundation for our work during the year. I firmly believe that if we address these tasks in a spirit of cooperation, we will compile an impressive record of achievement, not only on Article VII, but on a wide range of issues. And when we gather at the November Conference of the States Parties, we will be able to look back proudly on our accomplishments. Thank you.

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