



2022 UN General Assembly

Other Weapons of Mass Destruction

New Zealand Delegation

October 2022

Thank you, Chair.

New Zealand remains resolute in our rejection and condemnation of any use of chemical or biological weapons anywhere, by anyone, under any circumstances.

We are deeply concerned by proven cases of use of **chemical weapons**, which are an affront to the global rules and norms that we have collectively committed to preserve and defend. New Zealand reinforces our strong support for the critical work of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in identifying and attributing chemical weapons attacks. The Organisation works tirelessly to fulfil its mandate and makes it possible for the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention to uphold our treaty, and hold the line against the kind of atrocities we have witnessed in recent years. We must ensure the OPCW continues to have the proper support it needs to fulfil its mandate. New Zealand has made two voluntary contributions to the OPCW this year and we call on all States Parties to provide the political and financial support that our Technical Secretariat requires, including payment of assessed contributions on time and in full.

We also underline our ongoing commitment to the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons and the work it does to hold to account those who dare to use these repugnant weapons.

We continue to urge the Russian Federation to cooperate fully with the international community and the OPCW to provide answers regarding the poisoning of Mr. Alexei Navalny.

We also remind Syria of its obligations following the adoption of the decision *Addressing the Possession and Use of Chemical Weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic*, and urge Syria to comply with the decision of the Conference of the States Parties at the OPCW without delay.

Notwithstanding these challenges, we look forward to continuing our cooperative efforts to advance peace and international security through the OPCW and other relevant fora.

In this regard, we welcome the efforts of the Governments of Australia and Malaysia to host a Subregional Forum on National Implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention for Pacific Island States. We are delighted that the Director-General of the OPCW will attend. Our region's commitment to this shows how seriously we take the task of upholding the Chemical Weapons Convention – it is the responsibility of all states, large and small.

We also welcome the productive discussions that have taken place in the lead up to next year's Chemical Weapons Convention Review Conference, and New Zealand stands ready to work collaboratively to strengthen and safeguard the Convention to ensure it continues to deliver for the international community in the decades ahead.

Turning to **biological weapons** briefly, the Ninth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention, scheduled to take place later this year, provides a timely opportunity to strengthen this important element of the global disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. We encourage all BWC States Parties to participate constructively in pursuit of this aim.

For too long, the Convention has lacked robust means to ensure confidence in compliance with its prohibitions. In this respect, we commend recent initiatives like the joint US, UK, Canadian and Dutch proposal for the establishment of a two-year Experts Working Group to explore ways to strengthen the BWC. New Zealand was pleased to co-sponsor this initiative and encourages others to do the same. It is our hope that through initiatives like this, the BWC's States Parties can further realise the Convention's potential to contribute to international security. We also support efforts to strengthen the BWC's capacity to review the implications of scientific and technological developments for its effectiveness.

Thank you.

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