

Review Conference Outlines

2013:

Third Review Conference of the CWC took place from 8-19 April 2013 and culminated in the adoption by consensus of a two-part final document. The first part was a political declaration that reaffirmed the "un-equivocal commitment" of the States Parties to the goals of the CWC. It also included sections in which the States Parties expressed their concerns about the possible use of chemical weapons in Syria, but also recognized the contributions of the CWC to the overall elimination of chemical weapons. The second part of the final document comprised a comprehensive review of the implementation of the CWC since 2008, the year of the previous Review Conference. It noted the destruction of 80% of the world's chemical weapons stocks, and reiterated calls for all states to continue their commitment to eliminate their stockpiles and follow their obligations under the CWC. Delegates from 122 States Parties, 8 international organizations, and 3 States not Party participated in the conference, which was chaired by Polish Ambassador Krzysztof Paturej. Also of note was the "unprecedented level" of participation by 47 non-governmental organizations, which, for the first time, were allowed to speak to the delegates in an informal plenary session.

2008:

The Second Review Conference took place on April 7-18 2008 with the participation of 114 States Parties. Angola, Iraq and Lebanon were accorded observer status. Ambassador Waleed Ben Abdel Karim El Khereiiji of Saudi Arabia chaired the conference.

The conference report noted that an additional 32 states became party to the CWC since the first review conference of 2003. Before the conference, in October 2007, members of the Review Conference's Executive Council visited an American chemical weapons destruction facility, and reaffirmed the CWC's commitment to not harming any state's economic or technological progress. It also noted that more than 38% of the Category 1 chemical weapons initially declared by States Parties had been destroyed by 1 April 2008. The report praised Albania for being the first country to fully eliminate its chemical weapons stockpile, but expressed the States Parties' concerns about the 60% of the original stockpiles that still remained. The report concluded that the definitions of chemical weapons and their production facilities had been able to deal with scientific and technological progress. It also reaffirmed the goals and purpose of the CWC, while calling on all non-signatories to join the convention and destroy their weapons stockpiles.

2003:

The First Review Conference of the CWC was held from 28 April to 9 May 2003 in The Hague. From the 151 States Parties to the CWC, 110 delegations attended the Conference. The States Parties adopted both a Political Declaration and a Review Document at the end of the Conference.

The Political Declaration evaluated the operation of the Convention. The declaration stressed the importance of the timely destruction of chemical weapons, establishing a credible verification regime related to peaceful activities, and working towards the nonproliferation and confidence-building aims of the Convention. The document also emphasized that universal adherence to the Convention would help prevent terrorists from accessing chemical weapons. The States Parties also stressed the need for the OPCW to continue promoting the free trade of chemicals, international cooperation, and the exchange of scientific and technological information.

The Review Document assessed the implementation of specific provisions of the Convention during its first six years. It also reviewed the CWC's role in enhancing international peace and security, as well as the OPCW's ability to conduct inspections of chemical weapons and industrial facilities, and to assist States Parties in dealing with the use or threat of use of chemical weapons. The document encouraged States Parties to assist each other with the destruction of chemical weapons, if help is requested.

The First Review Conference as a whole noted that a large part of the OPCW's resources allocated for verification had been spent on monitoring of chemical weapons destruction operations. Predicting the increase in such operations that would take place in subsequent years, the Conference emphasized the importance of optimizing the OPCW's verification methods. Importantly, it also noted that no challenge inspections or investigations of alleged use had been requested of the OPCW since the CWC's entry into force.