

Ladies and Gentlemen good morning,

My name is Lieutenant General Chalersmuk Yugala. I am a retired army officer and the Escort Team Leader. For the next few days starting this morning, members of my team and I take our mind and time from fighting and trying to survive torrents of flood water, which creates a national crisis of gargantuan proportions affecting more than a fifth of the country, including the capital city, in order to be working with you.

We are upset by the allegation that put my country in the limelight that we not wish to be in. We are proud to be an exemplary State Party to the Convention, as our track record has shown us to be both transparent and co-operative. We are therefore puzzled by the somewhat flimsy allegation and the ease that OPCW derived the decision to mount this unprecedented Challenge Inspection. Nevertheless, we are prepared to fully co-operate in this investigation for the purpose of clarifying the truth and exposing the fact that we believe to have no solid foundation whatsoever.

Ladies and gentlemen, the challenge is on you – the inspectors. I need not remind you that you do not have limitless time to fulfill OPCW's mandate. We the Escort Team will facilitate you in your endeavor. But let me be very clear and blunt. We are going to defend to the very end: first and foremost, our country's integrity, secondly the integrity of the firm that owns and operates the alleged facility, and thirdly my country's rights under the Convention.

At this juncture we would like to adjourn to study the details of the mandate and to deliberate our response. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.