Distinguished Guests,
Dear participants,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all to the OPCW-RACVIAC seminar on the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) with specific focus on legislative aspects. I wish to sincerely thank RACVIAC for its warm hospitality. I also wish to thank Ms Vedrana Djukaric, as the focal point for RACVIAC, for the excellent organisational arrangements she has made. The OPCW holds CWC related seminars at RACVIAC since 2004 and it is important to stress that such kind of events serve as a forum which directly helps enhancing regional stability, transparency and trust.

Our two days and half seminar is a continuation of a fruitful cooperation between RACVIAC and the OPCW in promoting the implementation of the CWC in South Eastern Europe. This year the main focus will be put on legislative aspects and requirements of implementing the Convention, in particular on the administrative and regulatory measures.

Obviously, without effective implementation and the enforcement of the Convention at the national level there is no sense to speak about world free of chemical weapons. The nature of the Convention’s regime is such that national implementation is crucial to ensure its efficacy.

There are two key factors on which effective national implementation of the Convention rests and they are the effective functioning of a network of National Authorities and the national legal frameworks.

Proper legislative framework is the prerequisite for the implementation for other interrelated numerous and quite specific obligations of States Parties derived from the Articles and Annexes of the CWC. And only national implementing legislation establishes necessary procedures as guarantee in ensuring that all provision within the Convention are respected.
Which measures have to be taken to prevent prohibited activities under the Convention? Article VII specifies the general obligation to prohibit, in the national jurisdiction, the activities prohibited to the State Party under the Convention. However, the extent and scope of measures largely depend on whether or not a country has chemical weapons and chemical weapons production facilities, as well as on the extent of its current or potential chemical industry.

Your region’s implementation record for Article VII obligations deserves compliments: all States Parties of the Eastern European Group have set up their National Authorities, provided information on their legislative measures to the Technical Secretariat and submitted their initial declarations. However, the main goal of our seminar today is to gain the extensive knowledge about administrative measures that are currently in place in the different countries in the sub-region.

Through national presentations and discussions the outcome of our joint exercise is expected to be twofold:  
- Enhanced knowledge and understanding of States Parties in the sub-region on the CWC, its provisions and requirements, roles and responsibilities as well as implementation measures under the Article VII of the Convention; and  
- Compilation of information regarding framework of the administrative/regulatory instruments available and adopted by the participating countries.

Thus, I welcome you once again to the CWC seminar on legislative aspects and wish for all of us productive stay at RACVIAC.