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CONVERSATION WITH H.E. MR. AHMET ÜZÜMCÜ, DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS

The conversation was convened at 6:15 p.m., Thursday, April 9 with the opening remarks given by Lori Damrosch, President of the American Society of International Law. Dr. Abiodun Williams, President of The Hague Institute for Global Justice moderated the panel and introduced the speaker: Ahmet Üzümcü, Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY LORI DAMROSCH*

I am Lori Damrosch, the president of ASIL, and we are extremely grateful for the sponsorship of this event. The Dutch Embassy for a number of years now has been extremely helpful to us in bringing to us guests who come all the way to Washington from The Hague, and we have had a long series of very successful collaborations. We are grateful also to the President of The Hague Institute for Global Justice as being quite instrumental in bringing this event together. So with acknowledgement to those who are co-sponsoring this program with us, I would like to turn the microphone over to Abiodun Williams, who is the President of The Hague Institute for Global Justice, and he will introduce our speaker. Thank you.

[Applause]

ABIODUN WILLIAMS†

Well, thank you very much, Lori. Ladies and gentlemen, a very warm welcome to what I am sure will be one of the highlights of this year's ASIL meeting, a discussion with Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü, Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

This plenary session is part of the regular Hague segment at the annual meetings, and it is a privilege for the organization which I lead, The Hague Institute for Global Justice, to be involved, along with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the City of The Hague, in bringing the work of The Hague-based institutions to this esteemed audience, and I would like to acknowledge the Deputy Mayor of The Hague who is here in the front row.

The Hague, as you all know more than most, is the epicenter of international law. Behind this reputation is its role as the host city to a unique constellation of courts and tribunals, although that is not the only role the city plays on the world stage. That we have the privilege of welcoming the Director-General here this evening should remind us, I think, that The Hague is not just a legal capital, but rather it is where the pursuit of peace and justice come together. Nothing could have illustrated the OPCW's contribution to this mission more fittingly than the decision of the Nobel Committee to award the organization the 2013 Nobel Peace Prize.

Having labored under the radar for years in pursuit of the implementation of the eighteen-year-old Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the Nobel Prize was a very public recognition of what the OPCW has achieved most recently, though notwithstanding setbacks in Syria.

* President of the American Society of International Law.

† President of The Hague Institute for Global Justice.