

Joint NGO Statement
**Promoting International Cooperation on Abandoned Sea Dumped Chemical Weapons
in the Context of a Climate Crisis**

Statement prepared by:
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(IDUM)

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Weapons Convention, The Hague, The Netherlands, 15 May – 19 May 2023

*Honorable Chairperson, Director General, Ministers, Ambassadors, Distinguished Delegates and
Civil Society,*

As we gather for the 5th Review Conference of State Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, we must take note of the persistent threat posed by decades of decaying toxic, abandoned, and sea-dumped chemical weapons to our planet and its inhabitants. These weapons not only pose a risk to human health, safety, and reuse, but also to the delicate marine ecosystems that sustain life on earth.

We must not forget the urgent need to address the challenge of climate change, which is one of the greatest threats facing humanity. United Nations Sustainable Development Goal #13, Climate Action, calls for urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. In this context, it is important to recognize the linkages between chemical weapons dumped in the past and the effects of climate change on the seas and oceans today.

Furthermore, United Nations Sustainable Development Goal #14, Life below Water, aims to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development. Sea-dumped chemical weapons threaten the achievement of this goal by contaminating the marine environments and threatening marine biodiversity.

Science with no logic has no place in today's society, while the world's oceans and sea-life are in serious decline. Yesterday's dumped chemical weapons that were "out-of-sight, out-of-mind," hidden in the depths of the seas, are today's threat to the survival of the ocean as they continue to defuse 24/7 into the seabed, water column, and sea-life.

Currently, there is no treaty or international law requiring the removal of chemical weapons or their degradation by-products from the seas. Current scientific evidence counsels that we should change this situation. Therefore, we call on all State Parties to affirm a commitment to the elimination of chemical weapons from the seas under the Convention and its principles, and to take concrete proposals to address the issue of sea-dumped chemical weapons in the current context of a climate crisis.

In doing so, State Parties will not only be fulfilling their obligations under the Convention, but will also contribute to the successful implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development

Goals (SDGs), Climate Action #13 and #14, Life Below Water, and protecting the health and well-being of our planet and its inhabitants.

A global solution to current underwater munitions threats is global cooperation, Ocean Action # 21356, passed by the UN Security Council for the International Dialogues on Underwater Munitions (IDUM), to establish a global Science and Technology Centre in Canada, as the “global focal point for international cooperation.” Ocean Action #21356 further seeks the development of **Underwater Munitions Actions Centers (UMAC’s)** in affected marine ecosystems to eradicate these weapons for the successful implementation of SDGs.

Further, I ask the OPCW to call on the United Nations for an urgent UN conference that focuses on human health and environmental concerns, in addition to security concerns, raised by dumped and buried chemical munitions.

We wish to have this joint statement included in the final CSP Report to nations and posted on its external server and website.

Statement Endorsements (Affiliations are listed for identification purposes only):

Craig Williams, *Chemical Weapons Convention Coalition*

Dr. Alexander Ghionis, *The Harvard Sussex Program*

Irene Kornelly, *Chemical Weapons Convention Coalition*

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