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## **STATEMENT BY VERTIC TO THE FOURTH REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES TO THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION**

The Hague, the Netherlands  
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Check against delivery

Mr Chair, Director-General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The CWC categorically prohibits any use of chemical weapons. CWC States Parties should therefore strongly condemn any use of chemical weapons and seek to uphold this norm in all relevant forums.

One of those related forums is the International Criminal Court (ICC), which was established by the Rome Statute and is located here in The Hague, the international city of peace and justice.

The Rome Statute was amended in 2010 to include the use of poison, poisoned weapons, and poisonous gases in non-international armed conflict as a war crime. It was amended again in 2017 to include the use of biological weapons in non-international armed conflict as a war crime.

Since 2010, 37 States have ratified the amendment regarding chemical weapons. Since 2017, no States have ratified the amendment regarding biological weapons. We therefore urge CWC States Parties that are party to the Rome Statute to ratify these amendments and to implement these changes into national criminal law as soon as possible, thereby demonstrating international determination to prohibit and prevent the use of these weapons.

Mr Chair, Article VII of the CWC requires States Parties to adopt national measures in order to implement their obligations under the CWC. According to the OPCW Technical Secretariat, 90 out of 188 States Parties (48%) had adopted legislation covering all key areas at the time of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Review Conference. There has been progress since then, thanks to implementation support programmes of the OPCW and others. In 2017, 122 out of 192 States Parties (64%) had adopted such legislation.

That leaves 71 States Parties that still need to adopt legislation covering key areas. Given both the resource constraints of the OPCW and the expertise residing in civil society, a more structured and sustainable approach is needed to ensure that civil society organisations are able to assist States in meeting their CWC-related obligations through domestic laws, regulations and policies. This could be achieved through tri-lateral partnerships between the OPCW, the donor community, and relevant civil society organisations.

VERTIC has spoken on its experience in providing legislative assistance for implementation of the CWC, and related instruments, during the side event organised by AFRICSIS yesterday. We look forward to continuing this conversation with interested States and organisations on the margins of this Conference.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

## Implementation Documents for the CWC and UN Security Council Resolution 1540 (available on our website [www.vertic.org](http://www.vertic.org))

### National Implementation of the CWC:

- [OPCW's National Legislation Implementation Kit for the Chemical Weapons Convention 2010](#) (in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish)
- [OPCW's National Legislation Implementation Kit for the Chemical Weapons Convention 2012: 'Initial Measures'](#) (in English)
- [VERTIC's Fact Sheet 8: National Implementation Measures for the CWC](#) (in Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish)

### National Implementation of UNSCR 1540:

- [VERTIC's Legislative Guide to National Implementation of UNSCR 1540](#) (in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish)
- [VERTIC's Comparison of Model Laws for the Implementation of UNSCR 1540](#) (in English)
- [VERTIC's Fact Sheet 6: National Implementation Measures for UNSCR 1540](#) (in Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish)

### VERTIC's Brief on the ICC Rome Statute:

- ["Chemical and biological weapons use in the Rome Statute: a case for change"](#)