

Deborah Klein Walker, EDD Past President, American Public Health Association, Washington DC, USA, Presentation to the Fourth Five-Year Review Conference (RV-4), Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, The Hague, The Netherlands, 19 November – 30 November, 2018

Mr. Chairman, Director-General, Distinguished Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen:

We applaud the establishment of the Chemical Weapons Convention with its many accomplishments since its creation twenty-five years ago. We acknowledge that 98% of the global population are covered by the Convention and that 96% of the chemical weapons stockpiles declared by possessor states have been verifiably destroyed. As the most universal arms control and disarmament treaty today with 193 States Parties and its commitment to implementation supported by adequate staff capacity, education and outreach, transparency and accountability, we believe it is a model for treaties and international agreements in other areas of important public health concerns that impact on the public's health and well-being. We applaud the OPCW on receiving the Nobel Peace Prize and will advocate that the Convention framework be used as a model for other major threats to the public's health.

Mr. Chairman,

The American Public Health Association (APHA) is a 146-year-old civil society organization with over 50,000 members from all 50 states in the United States and from many other countries of the world. APHA is committed to improving the health of populations using a science-based approach and a health equity and social justice lens. The public health community globally is committed to helping with the implementation of the treaty to assure that 1) all weapons, agents, and stockpiles are eliminated in an environmentally safe manner; 2) there is adequate education for all populations in ways that acknowledge the local culture and context; 3) there is transparency in all deliberations; 4) there is accountability for eliminating all chemical weapons, including those that are buried or dumped at sea; 5) there is support for the establishment of NGOs in every country to support public outreach and education; 6) there is planning and training for emergency preparedness at the local, regional and country level in all countries; 7) there is support for adequate public health disease registries and surveillance systems (that monitor diseases, injuries and behavioral health disorders) that can be used to assess and monitor the impact of chemical releases (from buried or sea-dumped chemical weapons) in the future; 8) research is supported on the impact of chemical weapons and the best methods for their elimination as related to human and animal health; 9) adequate health and other social supports are provided to those injured by the use of chemical weapons; and 10) the elimination of

chemical weapons does not disproportionately impact vulnerable populations (defined by income, class, gender, race, or disability).

All of these public health activities are embodied in the Global Charter for the Public's Health which was created by the World Federation of Public Health Associations in collaboration with the World Health Organization. The Charter provides a framework for dealing with the public health challenges of addressing and eliminating chemical weapons, including guidance for protection, prevention, and promotion services using four core functions (governance, information, advocacy, and capacity). The public health community acknowledges that environmental health is a major part of public health and that the elimination of chemical weapons is an important "social determinate of health." It is especially important that priority for support for these public health activities be given to low and middle income countries.

Over fifty years ago, APHA was one of the founding member associations of the World Federation of Public Health Associations (WFPHA), which now has 115 member associations, which are mostly multidisciplinary national public health associations. Chemical weapons and other weapons of mass destruction have been discussed in plenary sessions at the past four WFPHA Public Health Congresses held in Turkey, Ethiopia, India and Australia.

Mr. Chairman,

Public health agencies and professionals know that partnerships with all members of society, including industry and businesses, faith-based organizations, academic institutions, media, civil society organizations, and governmental agencies, are needed to achieve all the public health functions and improve population health.

We finally emphasize that the NGO community, represented by the established CWC Coalition, a global network of interested non-governmental experts, stakeholders, and civil society representatives, is pleased to work with all components of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to assure the Convention is fully implemented in a transparent, science-based, and community-inclusive manner. The public health community in all countries is committed to OPCW's success as it will assure better health and well-being for the public's health in all countries.

We recommend that the important advisory groups, including the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach, the Scientific Advisory Board, the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism, and the Open-Ended Working Group on Future Priorities, fully include the concerns and priorities of the public health community in their plans and deliberations.

Thank you for your attention to this and other statements of NGOs represented here, and I wish for this statement to be made part of the final CSP record and posted on the OPCW website.