

## Terrance Long, International Dialogue on Underwater Munitions, Fourth Five-Year CWC Review Conference, The Hague, The Netherlands, November 23, 2018

Mr. Chairman, Director-General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Underwater Chemical and Conventional Weapons are a threat to human health and the environment, an energetic threat, and a recover and reuse threat.

Throughout the 1920s, chemical weapons were dumped along the French and British coasts, in the English Channel, and the North and Baltic Seas. At the end of World War II, the Potsdam Agreement was signed between the three Allied Powers for reconstruction of Germany; that led to the dumping of massive quantities of chemical and conventional weapons into the seas until the 1970's, by most nations of the world, as a cheap means of disposal. However, these weapons have not been properly disposed of, but were simply dumped in our seas and oceans. "Out of Sight Out of Mind" was the prevailing philosophy.

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) entered into force in April 1997. However, the CWC does not provide the legal basis to cover chemical weapons dumped before 1985. The CWC only covers chemical weapons dumped after 1985, brought to the surface. CWC does not cover conventional or seabed weapons. There is an urgent need to develop a treaty that addresses all sea- and ocean-dumped weapons from a human health and environmental perspective.

The OSPAR Region is home for hundreds of known underwater weapons sites. Their contents and quantities are mostly unknown. The Canadian Army dumped six million tons of captured German ammunition in the North Sea, small compared to what the Americans, British, and Russians dumped. The munitions remain in Canada with sites in the Great Lakes, St Lawrence River, Bay of Fundy, the west coast of Canada, and more than 1,000 sites off Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador. Globally, there are more than 10,000 underwater munitions sites.

Retired Colonel Courtney Green, who carried out North Sea dumping operations for the British Army, wrote in his Master's Thesis on dumping, that "all the munitions were to be gone now."

The CHEMSEA Program identified tumors in cod fish including extra prudential fish diseases and the inability for juvenile cod to reproduce. Chemical Agents Clark I and Clark II, that are stated to hydrolyze in water, are being detected in fish and the seabed of the North Sea. Arsenic, which can bioaccumulate in the food chain, can ultimately produce human health concerns, including cancers. Scientific investigations found impacts on our environment and fish stocks from inorganic arsenic breaking-down from mustard gas spreading across our seafloors. Dumping of chemical weapons in the English Channel in 1920s was followed by the destruction of the oyster industry.

The International Dialogue on Underwater Munitions (IDUM), a Dutch-Canadian NGO, made a Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) #14 Voluntary Commitment for Ocean Action #21356 to establishment an International Marine Training Centre for Innovative Science and Technology for Sea-Dumped Weapons in Cape Breton, Canada. Underwater munitions impact negatively on SDG #13, Climate Change, and SDG #14, Life below Water. IDUM believes that there is an opportunity for global cooperation on underwater munitions.

The International Centre would assist coastal countries to develop Policy, Science, Technology and Responses to Underwater munitions. IDUM received commitments for in-kind contributions totaling 15 million dollars and cooperation with First Nations to develop the Centre in Cape Breton, Canada. IDUM believes The City of The Hague, or Geneva, could be an international headquarters and a venue for global voluntary cooperation with all stakeholders on underwater munitions (UWM).

- UWM must have greater United Nations and NGO involvement, and less involvement by Federal Defense Departments
- UWM must have substantial, long-term, financial and scientific commitments by NATO, the OPCW, and the United Nations
- The International Dialogue on Underwater Munitions (IDUM) invites State Parties to be partners, associated partners, and end users in the Centre to collectively address underwater munitions through Policy, Science, Technology, and Responses.

Although the risk of sea-dumped munitions does not meet the eye, the corrosion of the shells and rounds, which were dumped seven or more decades ago, is progressing fast now. It is feared that that in by 2005 major quantities of chemical agents had begun to leak into the sea. Beyond the immediate impact of a further depletion of the world's endangered fish stocks, poisonous agents will continue to enter the food chain via plankton. Toxic effects with possible genetic consequences would not be confined to the countries of the region, but become a worldwide concern.

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for your attention to this important issue. I would kindly ask that this statement be made part of the official RC-4 on-line record.