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INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHEMICAL ASSOCIATIONS

**STATEMENT BY RENÉ VAN SLOTEN ON BEHALF OF MARCO MENSINK
AT THE FOURTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE
STATES PARTIES TO REVIEW THE OPERATION OF THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS
CONVENTION**

I am René van Sloten, Executive Director with Cefic, the European Chemical Industry Council. On behalf of Cefic's Director General Marco Mensink, presently also ICCA Council Secretary, it is a great honour and pleasure for me to address you in his place today. The International Council of Chemical Associations represents the global chemical industry with over 90% of global chemical sales.

Firstly, I recall the unwavering support of ICCA for the object and purpose of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The preamble of the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter "the Convention") states that "Achievements in the field of chemistry should be exclusively for the benefit of mankind" and we wholeheartedly share that objective. The chemical industry's support of the Convention is a natural extension of its globally recognised and award-winning Responsible Care programme. In the negotiations that led to the Convention, the chemical industry has considered-and still considers-itself not only as subject to verification activities, but also as a partner and resource to governments and the OPCW. Over the years, our cooperation has intensified and matured. ICCA representatives participate in numerous events of the OPCW and offer their expertise in various subsidiary bodies.

Secondly, I would like to stress the importance of dialogue. ICCA believes it should be a priority to involve the chemical industry whenever issues arise before the OPCW that have an impact on commercial activities, including verification. We are therefore pleased that we now have a structured dialogue with the OPCW through the Chemical Industry Coordination Group and the OPCW-ICCA Joint Steering Committee-set up in 2014-which is working well. Dialogue is a key to success! Participation in expert hearings and conferences and the ability to provide written submissions and position papers are invaluable tools to maintain the dialogue. It was a great honour and pleasure for us to welcome Ambassador Arias at the ICCA Board of Directors meeting in Amsterdam last month. The creation of a trustful partnership is not only valuable for ICCA and the OPCW Secretariat, but also for the relations between national authorities and industrial players: "Sharing is Caring"!

Thirdly, I would like to highlight what we see as the key focus of OPCW activity. As the destruction of the declared stockpiles of chemical weapons is nearing its end, discussions about future priorities have begun. However, as various events in recent years have shown, the relevance of the Convention remains undiminished. In our view the OPCW therefore



needs to maintain a robust capacity to analyse, investigate and provide assistance in the case of use of chemical weapons or any other activity related to chemical warfare agents.

Furthermore, national implementation and universality remain relevant as well. Even more than 20 years after entry into force of the Convention, there is still a lack of full implementation in many States Parties, and a few, but important countries remain outside of the Convention. This has at least two consequences. First, it makes it easier for States Parties, sub-State actors and individuals to engage in activities prohibited by the Convention. Secondly, it puts at a disadvantage those States Parties and companies within their territories, which fully comply. Both undermine the confidence in the functioning of the Convention. Universality is of special importance, because as long as key countries remain outside of the Convention, neighbouring and other States Parties need to maintain capacities, which can turn from defensive to offensive.

Although the Convention considers that other areas of activity might be developed under Article XI, the main focus of the OPCW should remain on eliminating and preventing the use of chemistry for weapons purposes. We acknowledge the coordinating role that the OPCW can play with respect to chemical security. For ICCA, chemical safety and security are flip sides of the same coin. However, we counsel against duplication of relevant work already undertaken in other dedicated international organisations regarding chemical safety. Industry outreach activities, e.g. promoting chemical safety and security, should therefore build on existing programmes, such as the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, sponsored by the United Nations Environmental Programme, or Responsible Care®, including its Security Code.

Fourthly, I would like to point at some verification-related issues. We view verification provisions under Article VI largely as confidence-building measures: only what is declared will be verified; anything that is not declared, will not be verified. We therefore assume that no declarable and inspectable facility will violate the core principles of the Convention. On the contrary, any facility, which potentially should be declared, but is not, deserves special attention. More than 20 years after entry into force of the Convention and after more than 3600 inspections in chemical industry, the routine verification regime in chemical industry by and large has been proven to be effective and efficient. Any changes should only be implemented if they reduce complexity, time or effort. As stated in our position paper for this Review Conference, we are therefore concerned about the discussions regarding possible inclusion of bio-based production and mixtures. To compensate the increase by thousands of facilities to be inspected, more or less arbitrary exceptions are also discussed. In this respect, we disagree that there are sites with high or low relevance to the object and purpose of the Convention. What it takes to produce chemical weapons is (political) will, know-how and resources, to retrofit any existing plant or build a new one. There are no objective criteria for “flexibility” or “convertibility”. Therefore, no plant site is inherently more relevant than another, even though from a purely chemical engineering and economic point of view some sites might be better suited than others. Trying to define criteria by additional reporting requirements would only further complicate the already difficult situation of OCPF declarations.

The issue of transfer discrepancies remains a sore point in the verification regime. Numerous workshops, expert meetings and industry cluster sessions have clearly shown that they do not result from negligence or deliberate false declarations, but rather from widely varying

national implementation procedures by the States Parties. The chemical industry remains committed to helping improve this situation.

I can assure you of the continued support of the ICCA for your work in fully and effectively implementing the Chemical Weapons Convention, in the spirit of partnership and constructive cooperation.

Mr Chairman, I request that these remarks be treated as an official document of the Conference and that they be posted on the OPCW website.

Thank you for your attention.

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