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Chair, Colorado Citizens' Advisory Commission
Pueblo, Colorado, U.S.A.

Statement to the Twenty-Fourth Conference of the States Parties (CSP)
Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)
The Hague, The Netherlands, November 2019

Mr Chairman, Mr Director General, Distinguished Delegates and Guests,

I am honored to provide to you this update on activities in Pueblo, Colorado concerning the destruction of the chemical weapons currently stored and being destroyed at the Pueblo Chemical Depot.

The chemical weapons demilitarization program in Pueblo is moving forward and has currently destroyed almost one fourth of the total stockpile and 50% of the 155mm projectiles. This means that over 42% of the agent stored at the depot is destroyed. The program is designed to destroy some 780,000 mustard-filled chemical weapons by means of water neutralization and bio-treatment. In addition, alternative technologies, such as the Explosive Destruction System and the Static Detonation Chamber have been and will be used to destroy leakers and rejects to the main facility and all of the 4.2 mortars stored at the site. Under the auspices of the Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives Program and the United States Department of Defense, the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Project, commonly known as PCAPP and the SDCs, are carrying out to the greatest extent possible, the principles of citizen involvement, worker, stakeholder and environmental safety and transparency.

Mr. Chairman,

The four hallmarks of the chemical demilitarization program of transparency, citizen involvement, education and safety have transformed the Pueblo community and in many ways the US Department of Defense. These principles have brought about a community that is now comfortable with the neutralization-biotreatment facility constructed in the Pueblo community and has helped the alternative technologies gain acceptance. Fear, anger, and distrust of the process have been replaced with trust, understanding and knowledge. These principles are often difficult to maintain over a long period of time of

the program, so constant vigilance must prevail.

Transparency is one of the most important aspects of the program that helps to maintain trust. The citizens of Pueblo continue to have input into almost every aspect of the program. In the past year we have met extensively to discuss the use of the Static Detonation System for the destruction of the 4.2 mortars and the permitting that is involved in making this system operational in Pueblo. There are no easy answers to these issues and the many other issues that will arise in the future. The answers lie within the community discussions that are on-going and the trust that has been built over the years.

Safety is yet another cornerstone of the program that is most important to the community and the Department of Defense. Facility workers are our husbands and wives, sons and daughters, fathers and mothers, neighbors and friends. Keeping them healthy and safe in the work environment is a must. The surrounding environment, farms and ranches and small communities, must also remain unimpaired while destruction of the weapons continues. Vigilance will be kept throughout operations as these factors must not be compromised in the interest of rapid destruction of the chemical weapons in the stockpile.

Mr. Chairman,

Early in the Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives Program, and I suspect in some areas even today, the concept of providing communities with the tools to assist the Department of Defense and Department of the Army in making decisions was very controversial. The issue was power and the idea that power and ideas had to be closely held and not shared. Few could conceive of the idea of providing transparency and education to citizens without losing power. Today, transparency, education, trust and mutual understanding of decisions has led to shared power and in fact, increased power for our leaders, because they know that the decision is made by all people involved.

Mr Chairman,

Meeting the criteria of transparency, community involvement, education and safety has allowed the ACWA program, the community and the Department of Defense to work together with the Pueblo community to build a program that meets the needs of

everyone by employing face-to-face discussion and consensus and will result in the safe destruction in Pueblo of the stockpile and all secondary components of the stockpile by December 2023.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to provide you with a glimpse into the chemical weapons destruction program in Pueblo. I request that this statement be a part of the record of the 24th Conference of State Parties.