

"Statement of Record" to the Conference of State Parties Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) on the
Global Threat from Underwater Munitions (UWM)

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Mr. Chairman, Director General, Ambassadors, Ladies and Gentlemen,
today I would like to take this opportunity to speak about sea dumped
munitions.

The ocean covers nearly three quarters of the Earth's surface and
contains 96% of its living space and provides every other breath of
oxygen that we take in. It is an increasing source of protein for a
growing world population where food security may become a concern.
We all must acknowledge that passed dumping practices of munitions
are having a negative impact on the ocean.

Sea dumped munitions are point source emitters of pollution. They are
silent killers as we very often do not know they are present. Therefore,
by locating and removing them safely you are removing a threat to our
marine ecosystem and to human health and safety.

Sea dumped munitions negatively affect the health of our fish stocks.
Environmental impacts were identified during CHEMSEA, MODUM and
DAIMON Programs from extra fish diseases, stress on kidneys and livers
of Cod fish, and the inability of juvenile fish to reproduce and
the spreading of inorganic arsenic from the breakdown
products of mustard gas.

Some experts believed to be more than a billion tons of dumped munitions in the ocean. Some munitions have been decaying on the sea-floor for the last 90 years and many are carcinogens. Chemical munitions releases and their breakdown products have the ability to change the acidity of the ocean, creates dead zones and bleach corals.

Scientists believe, that some chemical weapons may dissipate in water, but others like arsenic, can bioaccumulation in the food chain, and, ultimately, produce human health and environmental concerns, including cancers.

Chemical weapons plumes drift freely in ocean waters from dumped munitions sites, exposing large areas to chemical contamination. Some scientists believe that chemical weapons plumes have begun to meet one-another that creates greater toxicity in the ocean threaten global fish stocks.

State Parties must consider actions to halting and reverse the decline in the health and productivity of the ocean and its ecosystems and to protecting and restoring its resilience and ecological integrity. We recognize that the wellbeing of present and future generations is inextricably linked to the health and productivity of our ocean, therefore actions are a must to protect the ocean from the impacts of decaying munitions.

Animal rights organizations have accused the German navy of killing 18 endangered porpoises by exploding British World War I mines in a marine nature preserve in the Fehmarn Belt, a narrow strait between Denmark and Germany. Bundesmarine exploded 42 mines during a NATO exercise in August, 39 of which were inside a nature preserve.

Jens Sternheim and his colleagues estimate that 1.6 million tons of conventional, explosive, lie on the ground of German waters in the Baltic and North Seas. "To get an idea, if you loaded the ammunition on a freight train, it would be 3,000 kilometers long," says Sternheim.

The killing of marine mammals is unacceptable. Militaries are trained to fight Wars, not to clean-up toxic munitions. Munitions were never designed to be dumped in the ocean to decay. One of the major obstacles to underwater munitions is the lack of proper disposal technologies and techniques that do not further harm the environment. Munitions should never be detonated underwater unless immediate life is threatened. They should be removed and properly disposed of.

International Dialogue on Underwater Munitions have made a voluntary commitment for a United Nations Ocean Action# 21356, to Establish an International Marine Training Centre on Innovative Science and Technology for Underwater Munitions.

We underline the need to integrate United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) 13 Climate Action and SDG 14 Life below Water and how achieving their inter-related targets related to the impacts on the ocean from sea dumped munitions. IDUM invite, State Parties, International Organizations, NGO's and all Stakeholders to cooperate on sea dumped munitions solutions.

In closing Mr. Chairman, I would like to state for the record there is an urgent need for United Nations to host a global conference at the UN on all classes of underwater munitions to address human health and environment impacts.

Mr. Chairman,

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