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

I welcome the opportunity to speak briefly before this important 24th meeting of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, and wish to associate my remarks with the statement of Ambassador Kevin Kelly from Ireland and the many other States Parties which joined his call for the importance of civil society, industry, academia, and non-government organizations participating in the CWC and working closely with the OPCW and States Parties. I would also cite the timely and helpful remarks of the European Ambassador Markus Leinonen.

The one main point I would like to add to the many excellent remarks of my NGO colleagues is the continued importance of the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM), the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT), and other timely efforts of the OPCW to fully implement the CWC and strengthen the global norm against chemical weapons. Only with such persistent follow-through to investigate any alleged use of chemical weapons and violations of the CWC, and to refer any and all perpetrators, whether state or non-state actors, to the United Nations and the International Criminal Court, will this historic abolition treaty help build a more safe, secure, healthy, and sustainable planet.

Mr. Chairman,

We must leave no stone unturned in protecting the global norm of the Convention; in ensuring that all violations will be thoroughly, professionally, and fairly investigated; in establishing a world free of chemical weapons; and in preventing chemical weapons from reemerging. The role of civil society will remain very important, and I am pleased that we have now been able, with the help of the CWC Coalition, to increase annual registration to close to 300 NGO representatives, well over ten times our CSP registration from a decade ago.

We will continue to actively support the OPCW and CWC, and look forward to helping all States Parties to fully implement this historic model arms control treaty.

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