**STATEMENT BY VERTIC
TO THE TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE
CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES TO THE
CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION**

The Hague, the Netherlands
25-29 November 2019
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Chair, Director-General, Distinguished Delegates,

According to the OPCW Technical Secretariat, 62% of States Parties have national legislation in place covering all of the initial measures, in line with Article VII of the Convention regarding national implementation measures.

Of the 74 States Parties without such legislation, 57 are working towards government approval of their bill and six are seeking approval by their legislative bodies. The remaining 11 States Parties have either not started any legislative efforts or have not notified the OPCW of such efforts. Limited human resources and staff turnover are some of the reasons for this delay. Efforts to improve institutional memory would therefore be beneficial in expediting States' legislative activities. We highly encourage States Parties to improve their institutional knowledge systems and dedicate time and resources, with international assistance upon request, to enhance their legislative processes.

Chair, this Conference of States Parties may decide on changes to the Convention's Annex on Chemicals. In the event that this occurs, States Parties with legislation in place may need to make corresponding changes to the Schedules contained in their national legislation. We encourage all States Parties to review their national legislation and make the necessary amendments to ensure full and effective implementation of the Convention.

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Chair, we are convened in The Hague, the international city of peace and justice. This city also hosts the International Criminal Court (ICC), which was established by the Rome Statute.

The Rome Statute was amended in 2010 to include the use of poison, poisoned weapons, and poisonous gases in non-international armed conflict as a war crime. Since the last Conference of States Parties, one State ratified this amendment, bringing the total number to 38 States Parties.

The Rome Statute was amended again in 2017 to include the use of biological and toxin weapons as a war crime. Two States, Luxembourg and Slovakia, have ratified this amendment so far.

We therefore urge CWC States Parties that are also party to the Rome Statute to ratify these amendments and to implement the necessary changes to national criminal law as soon as possible. Given, sadly, the OPCW's findings regarding the use of chemical weapons, it is imperative to demonstrate, in all relevant international forums, determination to prohibit and prevent the use of these weapons.

Thank you, Chair.

Implementation Documents for the CWC and UNSCR 1540 (available at www.vertic.org)

National Implementation of the CWC:
- OPCW's National Legislation Implementation Kit for the Chemical Weapons Convention 2010 *(in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish)*
- OPCW's National Legislation Implementation Kit for the Chemical Weapons Convention 2012: 'Initial Measures' *(in Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish, as revised in 2014)*
- VERTIC's Fact Sheet 8: National Implementation Measures for the CWC *(in Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish)*

National Implementation of UNSCR 1540:
- VERTIC's Legislative Guide to National Implementation of UNSCR 1540 *(in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish)*
- VERTIC's Comparison of Model Laws for the Implementation of UNSCR 1540 (*in English*)
- VERTIC's Fact Sheet 6: National Implementation Measures for UNSCR 1540 *(in Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish)*

VERTIC's Brief on the ICC Rome Statute:
- "Chemical and biological weapons use in the Rome Statute: a case for change"

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