

**JOINT STATEMENT****CONCERNING ACCREDITATION OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS
FOR THE TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE
OF THE STATES PARTIES**

This joint statement is delivered on behalf of Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, the Cook Islands, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, the Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and Vanuatu, and concerns the importance of upholding the established accreditation process for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to attend this Conference of the States Parties.

The 2013 Conference agreed to open the annual Conference of the States Parties to civil society groups. As States Parties, we supported the decision in 2013, and we continue to support the decision now. However, we are concerned that this important decision is being undermined by certain States Parties that are blocking the accreditation of some NGOs.

NGOs play a key role in supporting the global fight against the use of chemical weapons. It is crucial that the Conference of the States Parties engages with a wide range of civil society organisations and that we hear from diverse voices in order to strengthen the OPCW, and to ensure that it is capable of addressing the current and future challenges we face in achieving our collective aim of a world free from chemical weapons. Principles of inclusivity and transparency are at the core of the OPCW and its work. We need their expertise and voices in the room.

We are committed to promoting transparency and dialogue in this Organisation, including developing partnerships with organisations that share our concerns. Specifically, we underscore that the Guidelines adopted by the Conference of the States Parties at the Third Review Conference make clear that representatives of NGOs, whose activities and interests are demonstrably relevant to the object and purpose of the Chemical Weapons Convention, will be allowed to attend all future plenary sessions of the Conference of the States Parties, other than closed sessions. Only NGOs that have not been previously approved should be submitted to vetting by States Parties through the General Committee at the time of their first application.

We ask that this statement be made an official document of the Conference and published on the external server and the public website of the OPCW.

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