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Statement to the Twenty-Fifth Session of the Conference of the States Parties (CSP-25)
Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)
The Hague, The Netherlands

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

I am pleased to be able to address you today, albeit via videotape during this very difficult pandemic.

In the very short time which I have, I would like to make three concise points.

(1) The Convention is enforced today by 193 countries in order to build a world free of chemical weapons. This relates not only to verification of declared stockpile destruction, which should be completed in the next three years in the United States, but also to protecting against any use of chemical agents. We have all witnessed the use of chemical weapons in combat in Syria over the past seven or more years, and more recently in the United Kingdom and Russia as a tool of assassination. This must stop. I therefore emphasize the importance of the OPCW's Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), its Fact-Finding Mission (FFM), and its Investigation and Identification Team (IIT). We must not allow such illegal use of chemical weapons to continue, and must hold the responsible countries, groups, and/or individuals fully accountable for these blatant treaty violations.

(2) As we approach the final few years of declared stockpile destruction, having now verified the safe and permanent elimination of over 72,000 metric tons of chemical agent and millions of weapons in eight countries to date, we must begin more proactive evaluations and destruction of non-stockpile weapons and agents, both buried on land and dumped at sea. The United States was proactive in this regard by issuing a national review of over 200 suspected chemical agent burial sites in 1993¹, and has been working on the survey and cleanup of a large site – Spring Valley – in Washington DC since the mid-1990s. This should serve as a model for all other countries to do likewise. Also, we now know that enormous amounts of chemical weapons and agent have been dumped in every ocean of the world except for the Antarctic over the last century. We all must begin to be more proactive in better understanding the long-term health and environmental consequences of this egregious behavior and address this now in a scientific and safe cleanup effort.

(3) Lastly, let me emphasize the continued importance of engaging all stakeholders in our annual meetings and sessions. We have enlarged the annual registration of NGO representatives from a dozen over a decade ago to almost 300 today, a major step forward in strengthening the CWC.

¹ US Program Manager for Chemical Demilitarization (Project Manager for Non-Stockpile Chemical Materiel), *Survey and Analysis Report* (Second Edition), December 1996.

We will continue to expand the CWC Coalition and broaden global outreach, as we've done for a decade now, and are grateful for the support of Canada, Germany, and Norway, along with the OPCW and European Union,

Thank you for the time and attention, and I ask that this statement be made part of the final conference proceedings.