Ms. Irene Kornelly  
Chair, Colorado Citizens’ Advisory Commission  
Pueblo, Colorado, U.S.A.  

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

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

I am honored to provide you with this update on activities in Pueblo, Colorado  
concerning the destruction of the chemical weapons currently being destroyed at the  
Pueblo Chemical Depot.  

The chemical weapons demilitarization program in Pueblo has achieved several  
milestones in the past year. First, all 4.2 mortars have been reconfigured and are now  
ready for destruction in the Static Detonation Chambers (SDCs). Second and the most  
important, all 155mm projectiles have been destroyed in the Pueblo Chemical Agent-  
Destruction Pilot Plant (PCAPP). 295,677 munitions in Pueblo have been destroyed and  
67.7% of all agent has been destroyed. This has all been done without injury to the  
workers, the community and the environment. Lastly, full permitting for the PCAPP  
facility has been approved by the Colorado Department of Public Health and  
Environment (CDPHE).  

Alternative technologies are being deployed at the Depot to ensure that the United  
States meets the 2023 deadline for destruction of all chemical weapons at the Depot.  
The PCAPP facility is designed to destroy mustard-filled chemical weapons by means  
of water neutralization and biotreatment for the hydrolysate. The Explosive Destruction  
System was used early in the destruction timeline to destroy leaking and rejected  
munitions already stored at the Depot. The three Static Detonation Chambers (SDC)  
will be used to destroy leakers and rejects from the main facility and all of the 4.2  
mortars stored at the site. Construction of the SDCs is complete and systemization has  
begun. Full operations of the SDCs is anticipated in late 2021.  

Mr. Chairman,  

Under the auspices of the Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives Program and the  
United States Department of Defense, the PCAPP facility and the SDCs, are carrying  
out to the greatest extent possible, the principles of citizen, worker, and stakeholder  
involvement, and environmental safety and transparency. These principles have brought  
about a community that is now comfortable with the neutralization-biotreatment facility  
and has helped the alternative technologies gain acceptance. Fear, anger, and distrust of  
the processes have been replaced with trust, understanding and knowledge. These  
principles are often difficult to maintain over the long period of time of the program, so  
constant vigilance is necessary. There are no easy answers to the many issues that have  
been discussed and that will arise in the future. The answers lie within the community  
discussions that are on-going and the trust that has been built over the years.  

Safety is another cornerstone of the program and is most important to the community  
and the Department of Defense. Vigilance must be kept throughout operations to protect  
workers and communities from workplace accidents and environmental harm. These
factors must not be compromised in the interest of rapid destruction of the stockpile.

Mr. Chairman,

These accomplishments have been done while meeting the challenges of COVID 19. The personnel at PCAPP have followed the requirements mandated by the U.S. Center for Disease Control. Meetings have been conducted via teleconferencing and as many individuals as possible have worked at home. Enhanced cleaning of work areas has been instituted and barriers and partitions have been constructed to make for a safer work site. The results are that only a few workers have tested positive for the virus and no one has required hospitalization.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to provide you with a glimpse into the chemical weapons destruction program in Pueblo. I request that this statement be a part of the record of the 25th Conference of States Parties.