

Mr. Terrance Long
International Dialogues on Underwater Munitions (IDUM) Statement
Twenty-Fifth Session of the Conference of the States Parties (CSP-25)
to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), The Hague, The Netherlands

Director General, Ambassadors, Heads of Missions, Ladies and Gentlemen;

The Chemical Weapons Convention entered into Force on 29 April 1997 and is implemented by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. The OPCW promotes and verifies the adherence to the Chemical Weapons Convention, which prohibits the use of chemical weapons and requires their destruction.

States Parties from the 1910's up until the mid-1970's dumped chemical weapons into the seas and ocean globally as a cheap means of disposal. However, these weapons of mass destruction continue to wash up on our beaches, taken home for souvenirs, and found in fishing nets putting the public at risk from an accidental explosion or encounter with a toxic chemical munition.

Sea-Dumped Chemical Weapons (SDCWs) have been and remain a threat to public safety, reuse, human health, and the environment. SDCWs are one of the greatest threats to the successful implementation of United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 14, life below water. UN SDG requires that the munitions come up "out of the water" for proper disposal while some OPCW States Parties assume we should "leave them there".

SDCWs that supposedly hydrolyze in water, such as the agents, Clark I and Clark II, are being detected in the seabed, water column, and fish. Chemical weapons plumes have been detected 13 kilometers from the source. Thirty percent of all fish tested in the Baltic Sea contain warfare agents while the munitions continue to decay.

The continued Blow-in-Place Policy for SDCWs is having a major negative effect on the survival of global fish stocks and the ocean. The SDCWs are impacting on our lives, requiring actions by State Parties. The first action could be an OPCW/UN-Sponsor Conference on Sea Dumped Weapons with Civil Society.

Thank you for your attention, and I request that this statement be made part of the official CSP published proceedings.