

**Statement of Mr. Craig Williams, Program Director
Kentucky Environmental Foundation
Member, Kentucky Governor's Commission on Chemical Demilitarization
Co-Chair, Kentucky Citizen's Advisory Board on Chemical Weapons Destruction
Host Community Liaison to the US Department of Defense**

**25th Session of the Conference of the States Parties
The Hague, The Netherlands**

Mister Chairman, Director-General, Deputy Director-General, Excellencies, CWC Coalition colleagues, and Representatives of States Parties,

I would like to express my appreciation to the OPCW for providing the opportunity for NGO presentations during these Conferences.

I have been involved in the global effort to abolish chemical weapons since 1985 when it was announced that such weapons were stored near my home in Kentucky, USA.

Emphasizing protection of the health of the public and the environment, while undertaking the destruction of chemical weapons was, and remains my primary objective.

It was to give voice to these civil societies that in 1990 I founded the Chemical Weapons Working Group consisting of citizens groups in the U.S., the Pacific and Russia. Our organization actively engaged in supporting the United States and other Nations in ratifying the Convention.

The Blue Grass Chemical Activity is the final location of stockpiled chemical weapons in the U.S. And, as you have heard, significant progress has been made in accomplishing this mission.

Simultaneous destruction of mustard and nerve agents, using multiple technological approaches, demonstrates the commitment to continue expediting safe disposal of this last storage site in the U.S.

It is my considered opinion that on the current trajectory, completion of operations at Blue Grass will occur before the official projected date of 2023, due in great part to the unity of vision between the Federal and State Government entities and the citizens of the region.

In closing, let me state again my appreciation for this opportunity and reemphasize the distinctive nature of what this multilateral organization is close to achieving – global disarmament concerning chemical weapons. Each member should believe this is a model for future success in efforts to do likewise with other classes of weapons of mass destruction.

I thank you for your contribution to a more civil and peaceful world, and ask that this statement be included in the final conference proceedings.