

**Statement by Marie Isabelle Chevrier, PhD
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Good afternoon Mr. Chairman, distinguished officials and guests. It is an honor to address this Conference of States Parties from the perspective of the non-governmental sector. The Scientists Working Group on Chemical and Biological Weapons Control has long advocated for the total abolition of chemical and biological agents and toxins being used for nefarious purposes, including as weapons.

Before the CWC and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention were drafted, signed and entered into force, chemical, biological and toxin weapons were considered collectively, and separately, from explosive weapons in arms control and disarmament fora. The Conference on Disarmament and its predecessors recognized the perhaps particularly pernicious way these substances could affect the human body.

The British government's decision to formally propose severing biological from chemical weapons in order to achieve an international prohibition against biological and toxin weapons was based largely on political rather than scientific criteria. We do not call for a consolidation of the CWC and BTWC into a new international agreement; yet in lieu of a comprehensive CBW ban, cooperation, exchanges of information, best practices and particularly, implications of relevant research findings must continue among the OPCW, the BTWC's ISU, national governments, scientific experts and NGO actors.

The comparative institutional capacities of OPCW and the ISU argue strongly for the OPCW to take a leadership role in ensuring that such interaction takes place. For example, we commend the OPCW Scientific Advisory Board's recommendation to establish a working group on the analysis of biotoxins following the SAB's participation in the January 2020 meeting on investigating the alleged use of biological toxins. We would urge the biotoxin working group to include in their work biotoxins that are not included among the CWC's scheduled chemicals as well as bioregulators that are not typically toxic but could seriously harm or interfere with human cognition or other processes. This is but one example of the many ways in which the OPCW could demonstrate engagement and leadership in areas of overlap and mutual relevance between the agreements outlawing chemical, biological and toxin weapons and the communities that support and nurture that work.

Thank you for your time and attention, and please include this statement in the final CSP25 published proceedings.