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**Presentation to the 25th CWC Conference of States Parties (CSP25)**  
**Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons**  
**The Hague, The Netherlands**

Mr. Chairman, Director-General, Deputy Director-General, Excellencies, CWC Coalition Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The American Public Health Association (APHA), a 148-year-old civil society organization with members from all 50 states in the United States and from many other countries of the world, is committed to improving the health of populations using a science-based approach through a health equity and social justice lens. The public health community globally is committed to helping with the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention to assure that 1) all weapons, agents and stockpiles (including those buried or dumped at sea) are eliminated in an environmentally-safe manner; 2) there is transparency in all deliberations; 3) there is support for NGOs in every country to undertake public outreach in communities and education in culturally-appropriate formats; 4) there is planning and training for emergency preparedness at the local, regional and national levels in all countries; 5) there is support for adequate public health disease registries and surveillance systems (that monitor diseases, injuries and behavioral health disorders) that can be used to assess and monitor the impact of chemical releases; 6) research is supported on the impact of chemical agents and the best methods for their elimination as related to human and animal health; 7) adequate health and other social supports are provided to those injured by the use of chemical weapons and agents; and 8) the elimination of chemical weapons does not disproportionately impact vulnerable populations (defined by income, class, gender, race or disability).

All of these public health activities are embodied in the Global Charter for the Public's Health which was created by the World Federation of Public Health Associations in collaboration with the World Health Organization. The public health community acknowledges that environmental health is a major part of public health and that the elimination of chemical weapons is an important "social determinate of health."

Public health agencies and professionals know that partnerships with all members of society, including industry and businesses, faith-based organizations, academic institutions, media, civil society organizations and governmental agencies, are needed to fulfill all public health functions and improve population health. It is especially important that priority is given to support these public health activities within low and middle income countries.

We finally emphasize that the NGO community, represented by the established CWC Coalition, is pleased to work with all components of the OPCW to assure the Convention is fully implemented in a transparent, science-based and community-inclusive manner. The global public health community is committed to OPCW's success as it will ensure better health and well-being for the public's health in all countries.

Thank you for your attention to this and other statements of NGOs represented here, and I wish for this statement to be made part of the final CSP record and posted on the OPCW website.