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## **STATEMENT BY VERTIC TO THE TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES TO THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION**

The Hague, the Netherlands  
Check against delivery

Chair, Director-General, Distinguished Delegates,

Last year's Conference of States Parties agreed on changes to the Chemical Weapons Convention's Annex on Chemicals. These changes entered into force on 7 June 2020. At the national level, this means that States Parties that already have implementing legislation for the CWC in place may need to make corresponding changes to the Schedules as contained in their national legislation.

States Parties which have not adopted the necessary implementing legislation yet will need to draft and adopt such legislation and include these latest changes. According to the OPCW, 38% of States Parties still do not have the minimum legislative measures in place. This continues to be a cause for concern, as gaps in legislative frameworks at the national level weaken the strength of the CWC's international system as a whole.

The Covid-19 pandemic has underscored the need for effective legislation to respond to biological threats, for example through the authorisation and aligning of roles and responsibilities of government agencies to counter the pandemic. Legislation is of similar importance to the peaceful, safe and secure use of toxic chemicals and the prevention of chemical incidents.

Chair, the OPCW is located in the international city of peace and justice, which also hosts the International Criminal Court (ICC). The Rome Statute, which established the ICC, was amended in 2010 to include the use of poison, poisoned weapons, and poisonous gases in non-international armed conflict as a war crime. The Rome Statute was amended again in 2017 to include the use of biological and toxin weapons as a war crime. Moreover, other treaties focusing on terrorism, civil aviation and maritime navigation include provisions prohibiting chemical weapons. We urge states to consider adherence to these international agreements and to implement them in their national criminal law. It is crucial to act in support of the norm against chemical weapons, in each relevant international forum, in order to uphold and strengthen it.

In sum, we strongly encourage CWC States Parties to enhance legislative implementation of the Convention and seek international assistance where necessary. While Covid-19 has affected the provision of legislative assistance, it can still be offered remotely. The OPCW has assistance programmes in place, and others such as VERTIC also stand ready, for example through our legislative implementation project funded by the government of Norway.

Thank you, Chair.

#### **Legislative assistance for the CWC and UNSCR 1540**

- OPCW, “[Supporting National Implementation](#)”, e.g.
  - Internship Programme for [Legal Drafters](#) and National Authority Representatives
  - [Influential Visitors](#) Programme
  - [Stakeholders Forum](#) on National Implementing Legislation
- VERTIC, “[Legislative Assistance for National Implementation of the BWC and CWC](#)”, funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

#### **Implementation Documents for the CWC and UNSCR 1540**

National Implementation of the CWC:

- OPCW’s National Legislation Implementation Kit for the Chemical Weapons Convention [2010](#) (*in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish*)
- OPCW’s National Legislation Implementation Kit for the Chemical Weapons Convention [2012](#): ‘Initial Measures’ (*in Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish, as revised in 2014*)
- VERTIC’s [Fact Sheet 8](#): National Implementation Measures for the CWC (*in Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish*)

National Implementation of UNSCR 1540:

- VERTIC’s [Legislative Guide](#) to National Implementation of UNSCR 1540 (*in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish*)
- VERTIC’s [Comparison](#) of Model Laws for the Implementation of UNSCR 1540 (*in English*)
- VERTIC’s [Fact Sheet 6](#): National Implementation Measures for UNSCR 1540 (*in Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish*)

**VERTIC will soon publish new legislative assistance tools.** Please check our website [www.vertic.org](http://www.vertic.org) > ‘National Implementation’ > ‘Chemical Weapons and Materials’ for updates.