

JOINT STATEMENT CONCERNING ACCREDITATION OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS FOR THE TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES

This joint statement concerns the importance of upholding the goal of cooperation and inclusion in the accreditation process for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to attend this Conference of the States Parties and is delivered on behalf of the following States Parties:

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Panama, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America.

NGOs play a key role in supporting the global fight against the use of chemical weapons. It is crucial that the Conference of the States Parties engages with a wide range of civil society organisations and that we hear from diverse voices, in order to strengthen the OPCW, and to ensure that it is capable of addressing the current and future challenges we face in achieving our collective aim of a world free from chemical weapons. Principles of inclusivity and transparency are at the core of the OPCW and its work. We need the expertise and voices of civil society in the room.

We underscore that the Guidelines adopted by the Conference of the States Parties at the Third Review Conference were put in place to promote transparency and dialogue in this Organisation, including strengthening partnerships with organisations that share the concerns and aims of the States Parties.

However, we are concerned that the intent of these Guidelines is being undermined by a very small minority of States Parties blocking because of political reasons the accreditation of NGOs who have a proven track record of working on issues demonstrably relevant to the object and purpose of the Convention. Not agreeing to some of their positions should not be a valid argument to bar participation of NGO's as this prevents an optimal exchange of knowledge.

However, this has become a worrying pattern that goes against the spirit of cooperation and genuine partnership required to fulfill the aims of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

We ask that this statement be made an official document of the Conference and published on Catalyst and the public website of the OPCW.