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States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)
The Hague, The Netherlands

Chairperson, Director General, Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,

It is my honour to submit this written statement on behalf of our civil society, Srivaranam Organization for the Environmental Education (SOEE), for the Fifth Review Conference (RC-5).

In this statement, following two perspectives have been addressed for a consensus among the States Parties of the Convention in the RC-5 scheduled to review the operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and setting long-term views by providing strategic guidance to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

- 1) What should the Fifth Review Conference seek to address as a matter of priority?
- 2) What should be the priority areas for the OPCW in the next five years and why?

Statement.

1) What should the Fifth Review Conference seek to address as a matter of priority?

Role and Influence of Dual-use Chemicals:

Since entry into force of the Convention, the OPCW had verified the destruction of Chemical Weapons (CW), representing 99% of the total amount of declared agent. And, the remaining quantity to be destroyed, by September 2023, by the relevant possessor State Party. This regard, appreciation goes to the States Parties that have declared their Chemical Weapons and fulfilled the obligation of the Convention. At the same time, the OPCW in its 25 years of relentless dedication towards the implementation of the Convention, for a world free of Chemical Weapons, is highly appreciable and fully deserved for award of the Nobel Peace Prize for 2013.

Even after the tremendous effort and success made by the OPCW, in close coordination with the Member States of the Convention, in recent years, it was noticed that toxic chemicals were applied on civilian population in the conflict zones of Syria as Chemical Weapons which resulted several deaths and severe injuries to the human life.

The investigations so far have concluded that various chlorinated organic chemicals were found along with explosive residues. This was a clear indication of violation of the Convention by non-state actors by taking an advantage of “chemicals” particularly which are having toxic in nature and have dual-use properties.

Scientifically, it is impossible to define a true non-toxic chemical as every chemical has its own toxic dose that can harm life in a way.

The CWC defines **scheduled chemicals** into three categories including Schedule 1, Schedule 2 and Schedule 3. Apart from this, there are many **unscheduled chemicals** present.

In accordance with Article II of the Convention and its Annex on Chemicals, Schedule 1 chemicals are a type of Chemical Weapons, whereas, Schedules 2 and 3 chemicals are considered as toxic and precursor chemicals to Schedule 1 chemicals. Most Schedule 2 and 3 chemicals are important building blocks for production of Schedule 1 chemicals.

In addition, the Convention defines **unscheduled Discrete Organic Chemicals (DOCs)**, as part of Other Chemical Production Facilities (OCPF), which come under verification regime. However, unscheduled chemicals are not in the purview of the Convention.

Any chemical that has legitimate peaceful uses but which may also be used to make Chemical Weapons is a **dual-use chemical**.

Here is the question comes about “dual-use chemicals” which either may produce in a modern chemical production facility or in a local laboratory set up and can become building blocks to produce traditional Chemical Weapons.

Respected Chairperson,

Following are the few examples of dual-use chemicals that are widely used for the purposes not prohibited by the Convention.

- Thiodiglycol
- Phosphorus Trichloride
- Dimethyl Methyl Phosphonate DMMP
- Chlorine, Phosgene and Hydrogen Cyanide

Similarly, there are several other dual-use chemicals which play a key role in purposes that are not prohibited by the Convention, which include peaceful and legitimate uses, such as industry, agriculture, research, medicine, or pharmaceuticals. However, these dual-use chemicals are susceptible to being used in the manufacture of Chemical Weapons.

Considering, rapidly growing chemical industry sectors in many States Parties, with large numbers of declared facilities, it is highly necessary to pay a special attention in obtaining the declarations of dual-use chemicals, particularly from the unscheduled chemicals.

To address this issue, it is necessary to focus on dual-use chemicals for their classification and segregation from the scheduled as well as unscheduled chemicals. And, subject them to verification by the OPCW, in particular, regarding their end use.

This aspect of discussion is highly recommended for a dialogue in the RC-5 to conclude for relevant actions in preventing the deliberate use of dual-use chemicals for re-emergence of Chemical Weapons.

2) What should be the priority areas for the OPCW in the next five years and why?

a) 100% Destruction of the Declared Chemical Weapons Stockpiles.

As of 31 March 2022, 99% of the Chemical Weapons stockpiles destroyed whereas the remaining stock, by the relevant posses State Party, to be verified as destroyed by September 2023.

b) Chemical Industry Verifications.

To be continued to assure the non-proliferation of Chemical Weapons.

c) Universality of the Convention.

To pursue full universality of the Convention by reaching out to the remaining countries to join the Convention and to give up any and all Chemical Weapons stockpiles.

d) OPCW Regional Centres.

As 98% of the global population live under the protection of the Convention, with its 193 Member States committed to the CWC, it is recommended to establish necessary regional centers world over for effective and economical implementation of the Convention.

e) Coordination with Chemical Industry Associations Worldwide.

Maintain a consensus with leading chemical industry association worldwide on a continental basis to exchange necessary data related to chemical industry sectors.

f) Collaboration with Academia.

To analyze the significant challenges, that may come across the OPCW, by mediating with scientific professors and policy makers.

g) Collaboration with Regional Organizations or Forums.

For exchange of relevant data for effective implementation of the Convention from organizations or forums as like below (Illustrative list only);

- African Union (AU)
- ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)
- Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS) Forum
- Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)
- European Union (EU)
- International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL)
- League of Arab States (LAS)
- North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)
- South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)