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Statement on
Prevention of Chemical Accidents Triggered by Natural Hazards (Natech)

Statement by
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**Chairperson, Director General, Distinguished Delegates,
CWC Coalition Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is my honour to submit this statement on the safety and security management of toxic chemicals on behalf of the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), Srivaranam Organization for the Environmental Education (SOEE), which is based in India and addresses the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN Agenda 2030 and Education & Outreach associated with the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

Article XI of the CWC emphasises for economic and technological development of the States Parties. In this regard, Technical Secretariat (TS) of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has highlighted, in its latest report for the Executive Council (EC), the portfolio of programmes and activities that focus on integrated chemicals management.

The OPCW is highly appreciated for organizing several capacity-building activities, in cooperation with States Parties, which have given an impetus to the promotion of chemicals management that focuses on chemical safety and security management.

Safety and security management of toxic chemicals primarily lay on the governance of every State Party and chemical industry responsible for production, storage, and transportation. In this regard, partnerships between the OPCW and chemical industry associations, in particular the International Council of Chemical Associations (ICCA) and the International Chemical Trade Association (ICTA) have further strengthened the confidence on chemicals management.



The concept of the chemicals management is based on multiple factors such as policy, practices, science, and technology. Sound chemicals management minimises the risks from handling of chemicals and therefore it reduces release of chemicals.

Chemical release may occur in any form, deliberate and/or non-deliberate, which broadly include technical lapses, human error, terrorist attempts and natural disasters.

The chemical industry poses many challenges for the regulators of States Parties as incomplete regulation may have serious implications for the environment, human health, and economy. To address this issue, integrated chemicals management is suggested as a preventive model solution. On the grounds of fostering international cooperation, for safe and secure chemical management, it is suggested to review and adapt the comprehensive industrial chemicals management which was established by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Chemical management systems are established to deal with the various types of chemical incidents which refer to technological or anthropogenic events. Technological events that are triggered by natural hazards lead to chemical accidents. As per the World Health Organization (WHO), a natural hazard can trigger a chemical release and when the release is the result of a technological accident it is called a 'Natech' (natural-hazard-triggered **technological**) event. Natural hazards that have been found to cause Natech accidents include tropical cyclones, floods, thunderstorms, lightning, and earthquake.

Despite every care taken by the States Parties, chemical accidents with serious consequences continue to occur worldwide. And, Natech events potentially occur due to the worsening situation of climate change and its adverse effects. Natech events can impact on chemical industrial plants, pipeline network, and other infrastructure that handle storage and/or transport of toxic chemicals.

Recommendations and Action Items to the CWC Implementors:

Respected Chairperson,

To avert and deal with toxic chemical accidents, which are particularly triggered by natural hazards (Natech events), a consensus should be established by the States Parties for developing a set of guiding principles and strategic policy for prevention, preparedness, and response.

Natech events may have a potential impact on chemical accidents across national borders, thus requiring an exchange of information among involved States Parties.

Natech risk assessment and management is recommended for prevention of toxic chemical accidents by Natech events.

Recommend the OPCW to coordinate with UN organizations that are already working on the Natech risk management which include UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), UN Environment Program (UNEP) and, OECD.

