

**PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE INVOLVEMENT OF UNBS IN ENSURING A WORLD  
FREE OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS AND PEACEFUL USE OF CHEMISTRY**

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**BY**

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**The Chairman,  
The Vice Chairman,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and gentle men,**

I also add on the voice of the previous speakers to congratulate the chair and his team upon assuming those positions, and pledge necessary support as part of the NGO coalition.

**Introduction**

I stand here to represent, the Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS) and speak about its past, present and future involvement in ensuring a World Free of Chemicals Weapons and peaceful use of chemistry.

UNBS is mandated to provide sustainable standardization services and ensure good quality & safe chemical and non-chemical products on the Ugandan market. It also ensures safe production, transportation, storage, use and waste disposal of chemicals and non-chemical products in tandem with National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA), which is an environmental watchdog.

Due to inadequacy of NGOs in the chemical related fields, (most of the NGOs cover political, marriage & family, education and other related issues), UNBS plays most of those roles and it has actively participated and ensured achievement of the following:

- Advocacy for Toxic Chemicals Prohibition and Control Bill, 2015 that has just been passed in parliament to become an act pending signing by the President, plus involvement in other relevant policies, bills and amendments.
- It has also actively participated in development of the CBRN (Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear) National Action Plan (NAP), 2011 under the EU arrangement,

- It has also advocated for proper chemical use and disposal among others activities’.

This presentation is summarized with chemical incidents in Uganda, Uganda’s preparedness for any future chemical miss-use, UNBS’ sustainability strategy, prevailing capacity at hand, the gap and conclusion.

### **Chemical Incidents in Uganda**

Most of the chemical incidents in Uganda do not involve chemical warfare agents like Soman, Sarin, Masturd gas, VX among others but rather involves chemicals like concentrated Sulphuric acid, Hydrochloric acid, Chloroform that are used to attack people especially in marriages and other domestic violence related issues. The biggest problem has been open market access of such chemicals without any control and accountability on the buyer. However, with the passing of the Toxic Chemicals Prohibition and Control Bill 2015, such gaps will be bridged. On average over three(3) acid attacks and related chemical miss-use incidents happen in a month making a total of about 36 cases in a year.

Due to many acid attack incidents, an Acid Survivors’ Foundation was established in 2011 to arbitrate in acid related cases and give a hand in treatment and caring for the victims.

### **Uganda’s Preparedness for any Future Chemical Miss-use**

With the help of the EU under project 33: Building Centres of Excellence in African region and ensuring preparedness of such States for any CBRN related incidents. Such centres will help to train the first responders like Police, Army and other relevant stakeholders as may vary from State to State.

I along with other colleagues from relevant stakeholder organizations formed a national committee that formulated and developed the National Action Plan (NAP), 2011. Several meetings and workshops were held in Kampala, Uganda in which OPCW Assistance and Protection Division for EAC States was ably represented.

This has further fueled government’s effort to participate in such activities through construction of some required facilities.

Stock control and inventory of the chemicals that are locally produced and imported were taken to track the final users; several facilities for destruction of chemicals were constructed like industrial furnaces among other activities.

### **Prevailing capacity at hand**

UNBS has several departments like **Standards, Certification, Inspection** and **Testing** though the most relevant department in the chemical field is **testing** where chemistry and microbiology labs fall.

We have several instruments that we use in analysis like GC, GC/MS, HPLC, UV-VIS spectrometer, ICP-OES among others, most of which were donated by UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organization) while others were acquired through several running projects.

### **The gap**

- Inadequate facilities and capacity required to execute the required tasks
- Lack of enough equipment to perform some of the advanced analyses like LC-MS/MS
- Lack of access to some forums where relevant information, literature, methods and experiences are shared that could be borrowed and applied to expedite the execution of prevailing tasks.

### **Conclusion**

Given the prevailing conditions and level of State awareness of the dangers associated with unpreparedness and miss-use of chemicals and chemical related products, more public and government awareness and involvement in peaceful use of chemicals and chemistry is expected thus easing the work for the advocating NGOs in that area. In addition to that, if such identified gaps as highlighted above are addressed, peaceful use of chemistry will be an inevitable result. We look forward to participate in the Proficiency Testing exercise and we hope our laboratory is considered as a designated lab for use by the OPCW.

I thank you!