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Mister Chairman, Director General, Distinguished Delegates and Guests,

Thank you for providing me with this opportunity to speak about the chemical weapons demilitarization program in Pueblo, Colorado that will destroy chemical weapons through the use of neutralization and bio-treatment. The Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives Program, established by the U.S. Congress in 1995, provided communities a choice between incineration and non-incineration technologies. The Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Project, commonly known as PCAPP, is fully carrying out the principles of this program in Pueblo, Colorado.

Mister Chairman,

Imagine a small city situated along the Rocky Mountains, a community known for its steel mill, agriculture and tourism. Imagine the fear and anger displayed by the citizens as they are told 25 years ago that the weapons stored at the Pueblo Chemical Depot will be destroyed by incineration. Fear was for their crops, animals and environment! Fear for their families and livelihood over concerns that no one would purchase their crops or animals because they might be contaminated by emissions from the incineration facility. Anger that they had no input into this decision!

Now imagine this same community today, comfortable with the neutralization-biotreatment facility on the verge of destroying the weapons. There is no fear, no anger, and no distrust. There is understanding and almost complacency. This is what the principles of the Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives Program have done in Pueblo, Colorado.

The four hallmarks of this program are: transparency, community and citizen involvement, education of the workers and public, and safety of the workers, the community and the environment that have transformed the Pueblo community.

Transparency within the program is still the most important aspect of the program. The citizens of Pueblo continue to have input into almost every aspect of the program and have had from the beginning. Currently we are meeting to discuss a series of "what ifs" in dealing with the biotreatment system. The biotreatment system has many units that are critical to successful weapons destruction and the questions are "What should be done if one or more of the units fail?"

What are the criteria to determine success or failure? What are the alternatives?" These are questions that do not have easy answers, but are being discussed as a community.

Community and citizen involvement came into being with the establishment by Congress of Citizens' Advisory Commissions. Commission members in Pueblo are tenacious, ask questions, and are willing to argue and to speak up. Today the Citizens' Advisory Commissions in Pueblo and Blue Grass are active citizens groups, trusted by the community, state and federal regulators and the Department of Defense. Public meetings and tours of the construction site by citizens, Congress members and the OPCW are also a hallmark of community involvement.

Education of the community is an important part of transparency and understanding. Both Pueblo and Blue Grass have an educational specialist who goes into the schools and universities.

Outreach offices, located in each community, are where citizens can walk in and view displays and take away program information. The ACWA program website is where anyone can look up information, view pictures and watch YouTube videos about the processes.

The final cornerstone of the program is the most important to the community - safety. No one wants to send a loved one to work at a facility that is unsafe. No one wants to live near a facility that is unsafe. And lastly, destroying the weapons and the surrounding environment at the same time is unacceptable. The workers must be kept safe, the nearby residents must be safe and the environment must be protected. These factors must not be compromised in the course of destroying the chemical weapons in the stockpile.

Mister Chairman,

Early in the Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives Program, and still in some areas, the concept of providing communities with the tools to assist the Department of Defense and Department of the Army in making decisions was very controversial. The issue was power and the idea that power had to be closely held and not shared. Few could conceive of the idea of providing transparency and education to citizens without losing power. Today, there has been a reversal of this thought process. Transparency, education and mutual understanding of decisions has led to shared power and increased power for our leaders, because they know that not only is a decision their decision, but the decision of the stakeholders as well.

Mister Chairman,

Through meeting the criteria of transparency, community involvement, education and safety, the ACWA program allowed the community and the Department of Defense to work together to build a program that meets the needs of everyone by employing face-to-face discussion and consensus.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to provide you with a glimpse into the chemical weapons destruction effort in Pueblo. I ask that this statement be made part of the final CSP record and posted on the external server and website.