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**Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons**  
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Mister Chairman, Director-General, Distinguished Delegates, OPCW and CWC Coalition Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am pleased to be able to speak on behalf of Green Cross International again this year. As many of you are aware, we have spearheaded an effort, the CWC Coalition, over the past six years to promote public awareness of the Chemical Weapons Convention and to facilitate the productive involvement of civil society, including non-governmental organizations, academia, experts, and industry in the CWC and its implementing agency, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

Mister Chairman,

The OPCW and the CWC States Parties deserve much credit for their steady and ongoing progress in safely eliminating declared chemical weapons stockpiles. Since entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention over 18 years ago, over 90% of declared chemical weapons in eight countries has been verifiably destroyed – over 65,000 metric tons in millions of deadly munitions. This is an extraordinary accomplishment which we should not underestimate, and served as the basis for the 2013 Nobel Peace Prize. Green Cross is proud to have played a major role in helping facilitate this lengthy disarmament effort over the last twenty years, especially in our involvement at every chemical weapons stockpile site in Russia and in the whole US program.

We are most recently pleased with the very timely removal of all declared chemical agents and precursor chemicals from Syria last year, and want to congratulate and thank all countries who were engaged in this massive effort. With about 99% of Syria's chemical weapons now destroyed, we look forward to eliminating the final 1% this year.

Also deserving of recognition is the major progress made in universalizing the Convention. The accession of Syria in 2013, and both Myanmar and Angola in 2015, now points to only four countries outstanding – Egypt, Israel, North Korea, and South Sudan. With 192 States Parties today, the CWC has become the most successful multilateral disarmament treaty in history and has truly made a whole class of weapons of mass destruction taboo. It is a remarkable model of non-discriminatory disarmament to emulate in other important areas of global security.

Mister Chairman,

In spite of the success of the Chemical Weapons Convention, many significant challenges lie ahead. The first which I would note is the completion of safe destruction of declared

chemical weapons stockpiles. Although there has been significant schedule slippage in all destruction programs to date, the two largest possessor countries – Russia and the United States – have both made impressive progress and expended extraordinary amounts of resources to complete their demilitarization programs. I remain optimistic that these Cold War arsenals will finally be fully destroyed in the next 5-8 years.

Second, we all must work to fulfil the 2003 Action Plan for universality, bringing in the last four outstanding countries, noted earlier, as well as geographic areas which are not yet under OPCW verification auspices, so that the Convention truly becomes universal.

Third, the six Fact-Finding Mission reports of the OPCW regarding allegations of use of chemicals in the Syrian conflict have been very important in confirming the use of sarin, mustard, and chlorine over the past three years. The use of chemicals in warfare, banned by the Chemical Weapons Convention, by either government or non-government forces, must be stopped and those individuals, groups, or governments held accountable. The recently established Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) under United Nations auspices will hopefully help in this regard. I would urge the OPCW to publish all of these FFM reports and the forthcoming JIM report on its website as soon as possible, given that they are already in the public domain.

Mister Chairman,

Before I close, I want to express our congratulations to this year's winners of the OPCW-The Hague Award – Dr. Alastair Hay from the United Kingdom and Dr. Mahdi Balali-Mood of Iran – who both have worked for decades in the non-governmental sector to promote the abolition of chemical weapons and to care for those individuals who've been victimized by toxic chemicals.

Mister Chairman,

Finally, I want to emphasize the importance of involving civil society – non-governmental organizations, academics, industry, and other interested stakeholders – in the work of the OPCW and the CWC. Only by engaging all stakeholders globally will the OPCW retain its relevance and public awareness. The recent establishment of an Advisory Board on Education and Outreach has been a major step in the right direction, as well as expanding access for non-governmental experts to the OPCW, to its staff, and to States Parties; while this has been a long road since we first organized an “Open Forum” at the Peace Palace over a decade ago, real progress has been made in transparency, inclusiveness, and media access. An important sign of this progress is the fact that our CWC Coalition has since increased registered NGOs for the annual CSPs and five-year RevCons by a factor of ten in recent years. We look forward to further expanding this global network, and to engaging our Coalition members in regional outreach and research efforts in addition to here in The Hague.

We thank the States Parties, especially the Norwegian Foreign Ministry and the European Union, and Green Cross Switzerland for providing funding for the CWC Coalition and non-governmental stakeholders, and hope that these funds will continue into the future.

We all must recognize that the continued and expanded involvement of non-governmental experts in the works of the OPCW remains very important to a strong and effective organization in future years, and to precluding the re-emergence of chemical weapons around the globe.

Thank you for your kind attention, and I wish for this statement to be made part of the final CSP record and posted on the external server and website.