

**AUSTRALIA****STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF AUSTRALIA
AT THE TWENTIETH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES
ON THE JOINT PAPER ENTITLED “AEROSOLISATION OF CENTRAL NERVOUS
SYSTEM-ACTING CHEMICALS FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT PURPOSES”**

Thank you, Mr Chairman. On behalf of the delegations of Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Cyprus, Germany, Finland, Ireland, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, I have the honour to introduce a joint paper written for this Conference titled ‘Aerosolisation of Central Nervous System-Acting Chemicals for Law Enforcement Purposes’.

This joint paper expresses our concern about Central Nervous System-Acting Chemicals – fentanyl in particular – and their use in law enforcement. The paper calls for two things:

1. First, a start to discussions within the OPCW regarding these chemicals,
2. and second, for States Parties which are in a position to do so to make known their national positions regarding the use of these chemicals for law enforcement purposes.

Australia, for its part, believes that it is vital for the OPCW to consider the use of these chemicals within the context of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the spirit in which it was negotiated.

Chemicals such as the fentanyls are highly toxic – with some as toxic as the nerve agents listed under Schedule 1 of the Convention.

We acknowledge the legitimate medical uses of many of these chemicals – as anaesthetics, sedatives and analgesics – but for these purposes they are administered individually and under close supervision. When dispersed through the air, across a wide area, it is virtually impossible to control the doses received by each individual.

In view of the genuine risk of death or serious injury posed by Central Nervous System-Acting Chemicals used in law enforcement scenarios – plus the potential for proliferation and deliberate misuse of these chemicals – Australia is convinced that such discussions are clearly warranted. In fact, Mr Chairman, long overdue.

I ask that this statement be considered an official document of this Conference.

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