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**Statement to the Twenty-First Conference of the States Parties(CSP)  
Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)  
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Mr Chairman, Mr Director General, Distinguished Delegates, CWC Coalition Colleagues, and Guests,

Thank you for once again providing me with this opportunity to speak briefly about the chemical weapons demilitarization program in Pueblo, Colorado – a program designed to destroy some 780,000 mustard-filled chemical weapons through the use of water neutralization and bio-treatment. Under the auspices of the Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives Program, established by the U.S. Congress in 1995, the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Project, commonly known as PCAPP, is fully carrying out the principles of citizen involvement and transparency as established in this important program in Pueblo, Colorado.

Mr. Chairman,

Pueblo is a region in Colorado situated along the front range of the Rocky Mountains. It is a community known for its steel mill, agriculture, and tourism. More than 25 years ago the citizens were told that the weapons stored at the Pueblo Chemical Depot would be destroyed by incineration. Their response was fear and anger and an extraordinary community response designed to move the US Department of Defense away from incineration and toward another technology that they considered safer. Fear was for their crops, animals and environment! Fear was 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!

This same community today is comfortable with the neutralization-biotreatment facility that was constructed in the Pueblo community and I am pleased to say, has successfully this year begun the destruction of the stockpile. There is no fear, no anger, and no distrust of the process. It has been replaced with understanding and knowledge. This is what the principles of the Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives program have done in Pueblo, Colorado.

While the mission of this program is like all other chemical demilitarization programs: to fully destroy the stockpiled chemical weapons in a safe manner, there are four hallmarks of this program: 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 one of the most important aspects of the program. The citizens of Pueblo continue to have input into almost every aspect of the program. Currently we are meeting to discuss a series of “what ifs” in dealing with the biotreatment system. Since the biotreatment system has many units that are critical to successful completion of the project, the question is “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 of Citizens Advisory Commissions by the United States Congress. Creating commissions, however, did not insure that they would work as planned. Members had to be tenacious, ask questions, and be willing to argue and to speak up. Everyone had to have a voice and every question had to be taken seriously. Today the Citizens’ Advisory Commission in Pueblo is an active citizens’ group, trusted by the community, state and federal regulators and the Department of Defense.

Public meetings and tours of the construction site are also a hallmark of community involvement and education. Seldom does a month go by when there are not meetings and tours, from the local community clubs to visiting members of Congress and even the OPCW. Now with the active operation of the facility, site tours have been curtailed, but tours of the training facility continue and many tours are provided through the use of YouTube videos and discussion with experts on the process.

Education of the community may be the most important part of transparency and understanding. Pueblo has an educational specialist who goes into the schools to teach about chemical weapons and the destruction programs at the Depots. They teach about job opportunities to the older students, as well as the history of chemical warfare, chemistry, math and physics. Children down to the age of 10 learn about these programs and bring valuable information home to their parents.

An outreach office is located in the community, where citizens can walk in and view displays and take away program information. The ACWA program has a website 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. Facility workers, our husbands and wives, sons and daughters, fathers and mothers and neighbors work at a facility that is as safe or safer today than most manufacturing facilities in the world. And lastly, the surrounding environment remains unimpaired while destruction of the weapons continues. The workers are safe, the nearby residents are safe and the environment is being protected. Vigilance will be kept throughout operations as these factors must not be compromised during the course of destroying the chemical weapons in the stockpile.

Mr. Chairman,

Early in the Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternative Programs, and I suspect in some areas even today, 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, 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.

Mr Chairman,

Meeting the criteria of transparency, community involvement, education and safety has allowed the ACWA program, the community and the Department of Defense to work together with the Pueblo community 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 program in Pueblo. I wish this statement to be made part of the final CSP record and posted on the external server and website.