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

We are now only five months away from celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Chemical Weapons Convention since entry into force in April 1997. And there is much to celebrate: the Convention is the most universal of all international arms control and disarmament agreements with 192 States Parties; we have now accomplished the safe, irreversible, and verified destruction of 93% -- over 66,000 metric tons -- of declared chemical weapons stockpiles; and over 6,300 inspections have taken place in 86 States Parties since 1997.

Green Cross International, founded by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1993, has been proud to have been a major part of this enormous progress over the past two decades in building a world free of chemical weapons. We have helped facilitate, in particular, the ongoing chemical weapons destruction operations in both Russia and the United States, and have facilitated consensus around technology choice, environmental and public health risks, and social-economic impacts in both countries. We have also advocated and organized civil society involvement, public outreach and education, and awareness-raising for the Convention and the OPCW since the late 1990s, and have coordinated the CWC Coalition in support of the OPCW since 2009.

I am proud to point out that this year that we have registered 165 civil society representatives from over 60 non-governmental organizations in 31 countries. This is the largest group of non-governmental experts and stakeholders, including academia and industry, to formally register for a CWC CSP or RevCon to date. We hope to continue to expand this number and to surpass the number of States Parties by our 2018 4<sup>th</sup> Review Conference here in The Hague.

But let me raise four major concerns as we move forward in continuing to strengthen the Convention and the OPCW.

First, the ongoing crisis in Syria, already mentioned by many of my colleagues from national delegations, threatens to undermine the global norm against use of chemical weapons. We are pleased that the 83<sup>rd</sup> OPCW Executive Council session has produced an excellent decision, and that the OPCW/United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism, the “JIM,” has also been recently extended for another year. Those individuals, organizations, and/or governments identified as using chemicals as weapons must be held accountable in order to strengthen our mutual goal of a world without chemical weapons and to prevent further repetition of these current violations of the Convention.

Second, although we have 192 States Parties in the Convention today, the remaining four countries outside of the CWC – Egypt, Israel, North Korea, and South Sudan – must be given priority by the OPCW and all States Parties so that we can soon achieve universality. This obviously will not be easy, but a proactive outreach and engagement effort by us all is needed to accomplish this mutual and very important goal. And we must also resolve the issue of certain regions of the world, which are not formal United Nations members, but still need to be open for OPCW inspections.

Third, we must all focus on maintaining the financial health of the OPCW. Every multilateral organization is only as effective and strong as its bottom line budget. We remain concerned that the push for a zero-growth budget for the OPCW for the past decade has begun to undermine its financial health, especially when we must now rely on voluntary contributions for such costly and important operations as the recent, and fortunately very successful, Syrian and Libyan chemical weapons demilitarization efforts. We note that recent OPCW cash-flow reports indicate a deficit of 2.7 million Euros by the end of calendar 2016. A large part of this projected deficit is the fact that 85 States Parties, as of October, remain in arrears of assessed payments to the OPCW. This is not sustainable and we urge all States Parties to make their contributions in a timely way.

Fourth and last, we commend both the US and Russian Federation for their ongoing progress in their chemical stockpile demilitarization progress. Russia has now destroyed about 93% of its

declared stockpile, the US about 90%, and both are still scheduled to complete destruction in 2020 and 2023 respectively. While we still may face additional stockpile declarations, should the remaining four non-member countries ratify or accede to the CWC, we must acknowledge the very large contribution and cost that both the United States and Russia have made to building a world free of chemical weapons.

Thank you for your attention, and I wish that this statement be made part of the CSP proceedings and be included on the external website.