CWC Coalition 2nd General Meeting
OPCW HQ (Ooms Room), The Hague, The Netherlands
09:00 – 18:00, 13 April 2011

Minutes

Participating organizations: Arab League (Egypt), ARI Movement (Turkey), Brazil Chemical Industry Association (Brazil), Center for Non-proliferation and Export Control (Kyrgyzstan), Egyptian Council on Foreign Affairs (Egypt), Global Green USA (USA), Green Cross Netherlands (Netherlands), Green Cross Russia (Russia), Hollings Center for International Dialogue (Turkey), IB Consultancy (Netherlands), Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) (India), Institute for National Security Studies (Israel)*, Institute for Security Studies (ISS) (South Africa), Kenyatta University (Kenya), Society for the Study of Peace and Conflict (India), South Asia Strategic Stability Institute (SASSI) (Pakistan/UK), TMC Asser Instituut (Netherlands), University of Amsterdam (Netherlands), University of Bradford (UK), Verification Research, Training and Information Centre (VERTIC) (UK), and Vigili del Fuoco (Italy).

(* Participating in an individual capacity)

Observers/presenters: Representatives of the delegations of Norway, Turkey and the United States to the OPCW; OPCW staff from the Media and Public Affairs Branch, Government Relations Branch and Implementation Support Branch.

Chair: Paul Walker, Global Green USA (USA)

Minutes: Angela Woodward, VERTIC (UK).

Introduction and welcome: Paul Walker (Global Green USA) welcomed participants and opened the meeting. Michael Luhan, head of the Media and Public Affairs Branch also welcomed all participants on behalf of the OPCW. All participants briefly introduced themselves and their organizations in an around-the-table discussion, and Paul Walker provided background on the establishment of the CWC Coalition in December 2009 at the 14th OPCW Conference of States Parties.

Ambassadors from the United States (Robert Mikulak) and Norway (Eva Bugge) gave opening remarks on the Chemical Weapons Convention’s (CWC) successes and remaining challenges, welcoming greater civil society involvement in the CWC’s operation and voicing their States’ support for the CWC Coalition’s activities to support the norm against chemical weapons (CW).

CWCC Coordination: A few participants expressed their frustration at their perceived lack of transparency in the CWCC’s coordination to date, insufficient communication with the Advisory Committee and other network members, and the proposed meeting agenda. This initiated a proposal to amend the coordination structure
agreed in the founding document, such that three Advisory Committee organizations would work more closely with the Coordination Hub to fulfil the coordination functions: ISS (South Africa), SASSI (Pakistan/UK) and VERTIC (UK) volunteered to undertake this work. Participants did not oppose this proposal. This new ‘Coordinating Group’ then amended the meeting agenda to focus on discussing and agreeing on outcomes for this meeting, particularly agreeing on a slate of specific CWCC project proposals.

**Review of CWCC Work Plan:** Angela Woodward (VERTIC) presented the CWCC 2011 Work Plan and invited comments and suggestions for project proposals to implement the Work Plan. The general discussion focussed on improving communications (within the network and with the public), developing template “messages” for network members to adapt and promote in their regular work, and engaging with other related stakeholder communities.

In terms of improving communications, participants saw value in: maintaining a comprehensive and accurate website, which is regularly updated, as a communication tool; disseminating information on members’ activities/publications on the website and in printed publications; and regular communications between network members by email and post (especially for members in regions where internet/email access is slow/unreliable). Participants accepted Amelia Broodryk’s (ISS) offer to solicit and collate content for the website and coordinate website updates with IB Consultancy, which maintains the website.

Some participants felt it would be helpful for the CWCC Coordination Hub to develop sample communications for network members to adapt for use in their advocacy and outreach activities in their country or region. Participants felt it isn’t feasible or desirable to develop a common message on every issue that is acceptable to all CWCC members; however some participants were concerned that contentious views put forward by some network members, ostensibly on behalf of the CWCC, may be perceived as being shared within the network. The issue of the developing and protecting the CWCC “brand” was also discussed. Some participants suggested developing projects that would engage stakeholder groups which are currently under-represented in the CW community.

The discussion on engaging with related stakeholder communities noted the need to expand the membership, as called for in the Founding Document. Some participants highlighted the value of closer coordination with the CWCC’s sister network in the biological weapons field, the BioWeapons Prevention Project (BWPP), which could yield more members for the CWCC and the possibility of timing events to involve the same participants, thereby reducing costs. Certain participants, especially those which are BWPP members, encouraged members to actively participate in the BWPP CBW Discussion Forum as a means of staying informed of topical CW (and BW) issues and engaging in discussions with other CW experts. Some participants also pointed to the growing overlap between chemical and biological weapons issues, especially regarding emerging science and technology developments, while others underlined the weaknesses in the BW sphere such as the lack of a verification/inspection regime.
There was a lively discussion on possible projects that individual network members might develop in cooperation with the Coordination Group. Ambassador Mohamed Shaker (Chairman, Egyptian Council on Foreign Affairs) gave an informative presentation on the status of the United Nations-proposed WMD Free Zone in the Middle East Conference scheduled for 2012, which instigated discussion on possible CWCC activities to promote universality and full implementation of the CWC as a civil society activity to support this conference’s objectives with respect to CW. Wael Al Assad (Arab League) and Yair Evron (Israel) also spoke about the need to press forward with WMD abolition in the Middle East region. Arda Batu (ARI Movement) discussed the possibility of hosting a CWC Coalition conference in Istanbul, Turkey over the coming year, and Paul Walker (Global Green USA) explained his conversations with the Turkish Foreign Ministry and the OPCW Director-General on that matter in recent months.

The OPCW Technical Secretariat Focal Point for the CWCC (Michael Luhan) also highlighted the availability of OPCW funding for civil society participation (travel and per diem) at certain OPCW events and encouraged network members to apply for these places. Participants noted the value in developing a roster of civil society expertise to better promote and effectively target this funding.

Drawing on the BWPP’s fundraising experience, participants suggested a range of possible projects consistent with the 2011 Work Plan for which project proposals would be developed. This slate of project proposals will then be pitched to possible funders. Some participants noted that once the CWCC had successfully completed smaller projects and cemented its reputation, funding for larger projects may be more forthcoming.

**Decisions:**

1) Participants agreed that project proposals on the following topics should be developed and promoted to prospective funders by interested network members in coordination with the CWCC Coordination Group.

- **Project 1:** CWC universality event(s) focussing on the Middle East, Myanmar and Angola (together or separately). Arda Batu, ARI Movement (Turkey) expressed willingness to work on a proposal focussing on the Middle East.

- **Project 2:** Open Forum at the CWC 16th Conference of the States Parties (CSP), The Hague, November 28-December 2, 2011.

- **Project 3:** Daily civil society summary reports of CWC meetings, similar to current BWPP reports from BTWC meetings.

- **Project 4:** Development, dissemination, and promotion of civil society papers at the annual OPCW CSP meetings and the 3rd CWC Review Conference in 2013.
- Project 5: Chemical Weapons Monitor (a civil society transparency initiative relating to the CW norm, with thematic, cross-cutting analysis).

- Project 6: Government training on the CWC and the norm against CW. This project would draw on network members’ expertise to conduct training sessions for parliamentarians, government delegations to the OPCW, especially from regions with low levels of civil society involvement in the CW issue or which are under-represented in the OPCW.

- Project 7: Industry sensitization, outreach, and engagement.

- Project 8: Training for first responders and border officials. South Asia Strategic Stability Institute (Pakistan/UK) expressed interest in working on this proposal.

2) Participants agreed to establish a roster of civil society expertise on CW non-proliferation and disarmament to inform CWCC project development and OPCW outreach (including possible invitations to relevant OPCW events). This activity does not require funding.

Other presentations: Krysztof Paturej, Director, Office of Special Projects, OPCW spoke about the OPCW’s multi-stakeholder engagement strategy and gave a summary of the seminar on “The OPCW’s contribution to security and the non-proliferation of chemical weapons” held during 11-12 April 2011 in The Hague, for which the OPCW funded the travel of a number of CWCC members. Michael Luhan, Head, Media and Public Affairs branch, OPCW and OPCW Technical Secretariat Focal Point for the CWCC, gave a concise presentation on the OPCW’s Public Diplomacy Action Plan and the use of social media. Anne O’Brien, Deputy Director, TMC Asser Institute, the Netherlands provided information on the institute’s Summer Programme on WMD, which is a training opportunity for young professionals working in arms control and non-proliferation.

OPCW Director-General roundtable discussion: Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü shared his views on the challenges facing the CWC and the OPCW’s work with participants and spoke warmly of the role that civil society is playing to support the Convention and its effective implementation. He also voiced his full support for the CWC Coalition and urged all participants to continue to promote involvement of civil society – non-governmental organizations, academia, think-tanks, and industry – in establishing a world free of chemical weapons.

The Permanent Representation of Germany to the OPCW, represented by Ms. Goenke Roscher, kindly sponsored a reception in the OPCW Delegates Lounge following the session with the Director-General.