

**Twenty-Sixth Session of the Conference of the  
States Parties (CSP-26) to the Chemical Weapons Convention  
The Hague, The Netherlands  
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**Statement by:  
Terrance Long, *Founder and Chairman*  
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Dear CSP Chair, Director-General, Delegates, CWC Coalition Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to take this opportunity to discuss the urgent need for a United Nations conference to protect the ocean and sea-life from becoming extinct from the legacy of underwater chemical and conventional munitions (UWMs).

Today, I refer to both chemical and conventional munitions, as Underwater Munitions, whereas both classes of weapons can be found together in the marine environment and both have been abandoned by State Parties, but are different under international law. Additionally, conventional explosives can be found in most chemical weapons.

The dumping of munitions was first documented in the 1910's in the English Channel and continued by most militaries of the world as a cheap means to dispose of obsolete, damaged, time-expired and unwanted munitions up until the mid-1970's when countries began to understand the ecological time-bomb they were creating.

Sixty years of dumping UWMs have left a deadly legacy of 100s of millions of tons of silent killers scattered throughout the seas and even in UNESCO protected biospheres and in the Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).

While these conventions ban the dumping of certain substances, no current treaty or customary international law requires the removal of chemical or conventional weapons or their by-products from the marine environment.

States widely agreed that international cooperation would be required to assess and increase awareness of underwater munitions. Yet when it came to lending financial and technical assistance, concrete proposals were not put forward.

Today, the world is faced with a global climate crisis that threatens the survival of the oceans and sea-life. Civil society urgently needs a new multilateral treaty to openly and transparently address the human health and environmental concerns related to UWM's.

In 1997 the Chemical Weapons Convention entered into force prohibiting States Parties from developing, producing, acquiring, using, and retaining chemical weapons. Articles within the Convention exclude any tangible responses to UWM's. Several side events by diplomatic missions, the private sector, and NGOs at CSPs and Review Conferences to engage State Parties on the issues have fallen upon deaf ears.

Arms control conventions have no common ground to protect the oceans and sea-life and do not address human health and the environment in the eyes of a global climate crisis. We are all aware that security will always trump environmental concerns. Using the two words in the same sentence draws concern that any future secretariats for security and environment might be used to further suppress environmental concerns in the name of security. The environment is our future and the economic security of our children.

The International Dialogues on Underwater Munitions (IDUM) is a registered Canadian non-governmental organization (NGO) and is a voluntary platform for cooperation where global stakeholders come together in an open and transparent process to constructively engage on policy, science, technology and responses to underwater munitions.

Over the past decade the need has become greater when we come to learn that there are seven known carcinogens which are found in marine life, the water column and adjacent marine sediments as well as circulating in the ocean currents. The leaching of high concentrations of nitrogen from the high explosive contents bleaches and kills corals. Their toxins are also implicated, causing elevated incidents of diseases such as Black Band Disease in corals and Black Spot Disease in lobsters and crabs, and promote harmful algae blooms that contribute to anoxic dead zones in the coastal oceans. These chemicals do not exist in the natural environment; they come from munitions.

In 2018 IDUM put forward Ocean Commitment #21356 in the UN Ocean Registry for an "Innovative Science and Technology Centre (ISTC)" in Canada (Nova Scotia).<sup>1</sup> The Centre would train people to survey, operate underwater vehicles and AI robotics, research vessels and remediation platforms, monitor and investigate equipment, and develop new and emerging technologies with the private sector to provide opportunity to remediate UWM's.

The role of the Centre would be to reduce the global impact on the seas and oceans by supporting the implementation of United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) #13, Climate Action, and #14, Life Below Water, to conserve for sustainability.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the collection of 17 interlocking goals designed to be a "blueprint to achieve a better, more sustainable future for all." The SDGs were set up in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly and are intended to be achieved by the year 2030.

The UWMs do and will continue to impede countries' abilities to achieve their SDG 2030 targets and the goal of protecting at least 30% of the oceans by the year 2030.

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<sup>1</sup> You can watch the corresponding video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ygk5XWHO-uA>

Governments should call on the United Nations to organize a conference on this serious issue. A new UN Treaty could encourage countries to remediate underwater munitions and to develop new and emerging green technologies for the blue economy. That approach would help successfully implement their United Nations Sustainable Development Goals to achieve their 2030 Targets while creating wealth and prosperity.

In closing, I would like to say underwater munitions are “point source emitters of pollution”, whereby you remove the bomb, and you thereby remove the source of Pollution.

IDUM stands ready to cooperate with the United Nations, States Parties and International organizations and bodies to address the impacts from decaying UWMs. IDUM puts forward its organization to be considered to help transition into an International NGO as a body to cooperate with States Parties on UWMs.

Thank you for your time and consideration