

**Twenty-Seventh Session of the Conference of the
States Parties (CSP-27) to the Chemical Weapons Convention**

The Hague, The Netherlands
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NGO Joint Statement:
Full National Implementation of the CWC

Statement prepared by:¹

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Chairperson, Director General, Distinguished Delegates, Civil Society Colleagues,

National implementation is crucial to the effective operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Under Article VII of the Convention, all States Parties must adopt the necessary measures to fulfil their obligations under the CWC, especially appropriate penal legislation.

As we approach the Fifth Review Conference, it is timely to take stock of the progress made by States Parties towards full national implementation. For example, it is a strong signal of positive engagement with the CWC that 192 of the 193 States Parties have now designated or established a National Authority, pursuant to paragraph 4 of Article VII, to serve as the national focal point for liaison with the OPCW and other States Parties. National Authorities play a key role in implementing the CWC at the national level.

However, according to the OPCW, in relation to legislative implementation of the Convention as of 31 July 2022, 37%² of States Parties still did not have the minimum legislative measures in place. States Parties which have not yet adopted the necessary implementing legislation must draft and adopt such legislation without delay. We also note the changes to the Convention's Annex on Chemicals, that was agreed upon at the Twenty-Fourth Session of the Conference of States Parties in 2019 and entered into force on 7 June 2020. As good practice, States Parties

¹ Please note: the following statement reflects the views and opinions of the authors and the co-signers, and does not necessarily reflect the views of all organizations and individuals within the CWC Coalition.

² See Report by the Director-General, "Overview of the Status of Implementation of Article VII of the Chemical Weapons Convention as at 31 July 2022," EC-101/DG.13, C-27/DG.9, 9 September 2022, <https://www.opcw.org/sites/default/files/documents/2022/09/ec101dg13%20c27dg09%2B%28e%29%20%281%29.pdf>

should review their national implementing legislation and update them as necessary to incorporate these changes.

National implementation is a continuous process. The adoption of national legislation can be time-consuming and resource intensive, and requires sustained effort and attention. The OPCW has identified some of the challenges States Parties face in adopting national legislation, including frequent staff turnover, other pressing issues taking priority over legislation, and lack of awareness and coordination among stakeholders. It is important that these challenges are addressed and that national implementation remains a priority. To this end, we encourage further research into identifying innovative and adaptive approaches to overcoming these challenges, and to advancing national implementation.

We note the success of assistance tools and programmes for implementation of the CWC, and the crucial work of the OPCW. We also note the valuable role that civil society plays in supporting national implementation of the Convention, as a result of their technical expertise. The CWC Coalition represents a diverse group of civil society actors, with various technical knowledge and expertise, many of whom can provide awareness raising, training and legislative assistance to further advance national implementation. We encourage States Parties to continue to engage with members of the civil society community to further national implementation of the Convention, and to continue to make use of available assistance activities to ensure that they have comprehensive and up to date national frameworks to implement the CWC.

Regional cooperation and initiatives also provide valuable opportunities for the exchange of proven practices and the development of tailored regional and national approaches. States Parties can helpfully share their practical experiences and lessons learned to other States Parties. We note with admiration the OPCW's efforts to foster regional cooperation and knowledge sharing, for example through the National Authorities Regional Meetings, and encourage States Parties to continue to actively engage in regional collaboration in order to advance effective national implementation.

Alongside the CWC, a number of other international instruments contribute to chemical safety and security. Amongst these, we note the application of the 2005 International Health Regulations (IHR) to chemical incidents. Other treaties that address terrorism, civil aviation and maritime navigation include provisions prohibiting chemical weapons, and there are also a number of environmental treaties and non-binding instruments that are relevant to the broader issue of chemical safety and security. CWC States Parties are therefore urged to consider adherence to these related international instruments and to implement them in their national law.

This Conference of States Parties meets amidst a challenging international security environment. It is crucial that States Parties continue to work together to strengthen and uphold the

Convention. We call upon States Parties to recognise the critical importance of national implementation and trust that this item will be devoted significant attention during the Fifth Review Conference. We encourage all States Parties to continue their ongoing work on effective national implementation of the Convention, to support a world free from chemical weapons.

Thank you, Chair.

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