

Information Note¹

- Event:** *Open Forum, Third Five-Year Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention Side Event*
- Organizers:** Chemical Weapons Convention Coalition (CWC Coalition or CWCC)
- Date and venue:** 10-12 April, 2013, The Hague, The Netherlands
- Participants:** *States:* delegates from 188 States Parties at The Third Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)
International organizations: Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), International Committee of the Red Cross, and others as registered with the OPCW
Non-Governmental Organizations, Industry, Academia, and Other Entities: members of the Chemical Weapons Convention Coalition and other NGOs registered with the OPCW²

1. Objectives of the workshop

The Third Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (i.e. “the Third Review Conference”) was held in The Hague, The Netherlands, 8-19 April 2013.

On the margins of the Third Review Conference there were a series of events organized by Member States and/or civil society (such as the Chemical Weapons Convention Coalition), to support the aims of the CWC and to supplement the efforts of the member states of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), with focused civil society action aimed at achieving full membership of the CWC, comprehensive national implementation of the CWC, the safe and timely elimination of all chemical weapons, preventing the misuse of chemicals for hostile purposes, and promoting their peaceful use.

2. Background

The Third Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) aimed “to undertake reviews of the operation of this Convention” and to “*take into account any relevant scientific and technological developments*”. Ambassador Krzysztof Patulej (Poland) served as the Chair for the Review Conference. The Conference was held at the World Forum Convention Center in the vicinity of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) headquarters. Official documents, including official statements, of the Third Review Conference are available from the OPCW website at: <http://www.opcw.org>.

In his opening statement, the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon noted that as long as chemical weapons exist, so, too, does the risk of their use “*by accident or design*” and that “*there are no right hands for the wrong weapons*”. Considering the specific task of the CWC to eliminate chemical weapons and prevent them from ever re-emerging, the Secretary General emphasized that the regime also has a broader mission “*to*

¹ For information –not an official report. The views expressed here do not necessarily represent those of the 1540 Committee or of the organizers or participants in the event.

² List of Non-Governmental Organizations Entitled to Attend the Third review Conference, available on the OPCW website at: <http://www.opcw.org/rc3/list-of-non-governmental-organisations-entitled-to-attend-the-third-review-conference/>

prove that the inhumanity of war can give rise to the humanity of solidarity. To show that the lust for military dominance can be tamed by a love of life. And to demonstrate that the depths of despair caused by chemical weapons can be overcome by international cooperation of the highest order”.

In his opening statement, OPCW Director-General Ahmet Üzümcü noted that as the OPCW wraps up its destruction-related activities “*a major theme for the Review Conference will be how best the core objectives of the Convention can continue to be effectively served*”. He proposed the setting up of a training and research center at the Technical Secretariat which will serve inter alia to maintain the OPCW knowledge base and expertise once destruction of the declared CW stockpiles is complete. He also said that the OPCW will pay much greater attention to “*tailor-made approaches*” to help individual countries implement their Convention obligations “*as a significant number of States Parties still need to take action*”. The Director-General also emphasized that “*the Chemical Weapons Convention serves the goals of the Charter of the United Nations. Where the Charter declares its purpose as the pursuit of international peace and security, the work of the OPCW presents a concrete manifestation of this aspiration.*” He also emphasized the OPCW support to the UN endeavors “*such as those meant to promote the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1540 (2004)*”.

For the first time at a CWC Review Conference, NGOs were given the opportunity to address the States Parties in a plenary session. The decision to allow such unprecedented access of the NGOs to a review conference was called a “*landmark*” by the Chair of the Conference, Ambassador Krzysztof Patulej (Poland), and the OPCW Director-General Ahmet Üzümcü welcomed the “*pioneer effort*” as a step forward in NGOs engagement and “*valuable and constructive inputs*” [as a side note, the Director-General attended several side events organized by the CWC Coalition where he welcomed again the NGOs as “*members of the OPCW family*”].

3. **Highlights**

During her time in The Hague, the 1540 expert attended the following side events:

- *Reinforcing the Global Norm Against Chemical Weapons (Chemical safety & security and Strengthening national implementation)* – organized by the CWC Coalition;
- *Sea-dumped chemical weapons* - organized by the International Dialogue on Underwater Munitions (IDUM), together with the Governments of Lithuania and Poland;
- *Cultural event: Film as a Medium for Education and Outreach* - organized by OPCW, Science Advisory Board Temporary Working Group on Education and Outreach;
- *Round Table Discussions on EU support for OPCW Activities* - organized by Sweden and Ireland;
- *Developing a program on chemical safety and security in Kenya* – organized by the International Center for Chemical Safety and Security (Poland) and TNO (Netherlands);
- *The multiple uses of chemicals: innovation, science and security- An informal thematic discussion on science and technology* - organized by OPCW Technical Secretariat

In addition, the 1540 expert presented on the *Synergy and Convergence between the Chemical Weapons Convention and the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540* during the *Open Forum* side event (organized by the CWC Coalition), to emphasize that States’ obligations pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) are consistent with those required of the CWC States Parties in accordance with Article VII of the Convention and to provide an overview of 1540 Committee and its Group of Experts and their cooperation and synergy with OPCW to facilitate capacity-building and address common threats to international peace and security. The 1540 expert’s presentation is posted online on the CWC Coalition’s website at: <http://www.cwccoalition.org> and the webcast of the entire *Open Forum* is on the OPCW website at: <http://www.opcw.org/rc3/webcasts> .

Overall, the side events were extremely rich in technical and substantive information and the topics invariably led to dynamic interventions and discussions among States Parties delegates, representatives of intergovernmental or regional organizations, and/or NGOs. The “*valuable and constructive inputs*” foreseen by the OPCW Director-General Ahmet Üzümcü when the CWC opened the proverbial door to NGOs’ active participation were indeed evident throughout the side events sessions.

Among the side events organized by the CWC Coalition, the *Open Forum* in particular showed the range of civil society involvement and contribution to national CWC implementation or associated activities. The forum was opened by Dr. Paul Walker, Director, Security and Sustainability, Green Cross International, and Coordinator, CWC Coalition. In addition to the 1540 expert, panelists included Dr. Rajiv Nayan, Senior Research Associate, Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses, New Delhi, India on “*The Future of CWC and OPCW*”; Dr. Michael Crowley, Project Coordinator, Bradford Non-Lethal Weapons Research Project, University of Bradford, UK, on the “*Regulation of Riot Control Agent Munitions, Means of Delivery and Dispersal*”; Dr. Sjoerd Looijs, Manager, Responsible Care at Cefic (European Chemical Industry Council, website: <http://www.cefic.org>), Brussels, Belgium, on “*The International Council of Chemical Associations (ICCA) Position Paper and Responsible Care for Chemical Industry*”; Prof. Maurizio Martellini, Secretary General, Landau Network-Centro Volta (LNCV), Como, Italy, on “*The Human Dimension in Sensitive Chemical Scientific and Technical Areas: Enhancing a Professional Responsibility Culture*”; Prof. Benjamin Ruiz-Loyola, Organic Chemistry and Science Communication, School of Chemistry, National University of Mexico, Mexico City, Mexico, on “*Science for Peace at the School of Chemistry, National University of Mexico*”, and Mr. Terrance P. Long, Founder and CEO, International Dialogues on Underwater Munitions, Nova Scotia, Canada, on “*Sea-Dumped Chemical Munitions*”.

The 1540 expert also met with OPCW staff to discuss the requests for assistance submitted to the 1540 Committee and the possibility of inclusion of resolution 1540-related information in the training and education activities undertaken by the OPCW.

4. **Additional comments**

For further information, please contact the 1540 Committee’s Group of Experts by e-mail at 1540experts@un.org.