

Statement presented by  
the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)  
at the First Review Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical  
Weapons Convention (CWC).

5 May 2003  
OPCW, The Hague, The Netherlands

Ladies and Gentlemen, distinguished guests and delegates. On behalf of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute – SIPRI -- I would like to thank the organizers of this event for arranging this meeting and providing me with the opportunity for making this statement.

SIPRI attaches great importance to the CWC. We believe that multilateral arms control and disarmament regimes continue to have a useful and necessary role in the current international security environment. The continued active and constructive engagement by States Parties is imperative in order to ensure the treaty's continued relevance and effective implementation in future.

That said, a number of proposals that are sometimes put forward with regard to CWC implementation do not take into full consideration some of the political realities of how this regime, or indeed how any multilateral arms control and disarmament regime, operates.

The most significant factor is the fact that decisions are almost always taken on the basis of consensus. This is generally a valid and important principle. A second factor is that CWC provisions must be implemented. The emphasis on CWC implementation in terms of allocation of resources since the treaty's entry into force has been on CW destruction and the destruction or conversion of former production facilities. The size of the organization's budget and the requirements of the CWC limit the possibilities for implementing other programmes and activities in the manner described in some proposals until such time as CW destruction has neared completion.

It may be possible for States Parties to devise a mechanism whereby parties agree to consider a basket of selected, operational-level matters that are more of an administrative, technical or scientific nature, rather than of a political nature. Decisions on such issues could be agreed either by consensus or by a two-thirds majority vote, as envisaged under procedures for deciding 'matters of substance'. Alternatively, it could be agreed that decisions on items contained in the basket were 'procedural', in which case a majority vote should suffice.

I realise that every issue that has been considered and discussed has political aspects. Even some seemingly purely technical questions, such as whether a scientific distinction can be drawn between chemical, and biological and biologically mediated processes,

actually have significant political and financial implications. In addition, some such issues are not infrequently needlessly politicised.

Nevertheless, if there is a sufficiently high level of political support provided to support the idea of placing selected issues onto a fast-track decision making process, provided they are of an operational, essentially non-political nature -- then significant progress could be made towards streamlining the CWC's implementation. This, in turn, would make the regime more cost effective and more effective in terms of verification of compliance. These are two points about which there can be little, if any, debate.

Once a decision was taken, the States Parties would then be politically committed to make the necessary procedural or legislative changes sooner or later.

Possible items in such a basket could include:

1. the collection and reporting methodologies for Aggregate National Data, and
2. final agreement on low concentration thresholds.

I realise that both of these issues have significant implications in terms of the treaty's cost, scope and intrusiveness. Yet in the final analysis, when seen from a broader perspective, are they not essentially operational in nature? And, to the extent that they are not, could there not be a sufficiently high level of political support given to overcome the political disagreements connected with these issues? Such support need only be sufficient to agree on 1. the fast track decision-making process and 2. to place a given agenda item onto the fast-track process.

It is also important and useful for those implementing the treaty to focus on a relatively small number of broader, more conceptual issues on a regular basis. At least five such areas stand out:

1. Effective national implementation legislation and a well-functioning National Authority in each State Party are critical components for the success of the CWC. This includes achieving a more effective and more even implementation of the General Purpose Criterion (GPC). UK national implementing legislation, for example, specifically mentions the GPC. The UK also has a special advisory committee that regularly revisits the issue of whether the GPC is being effectively implemented and, if not, considers measures that could be taken for improvement.
2. Ensuring that the OPCW is capable of making a credible response under Article X's provisions on Assistance and Protection Against Chemical Weapons. Failure to do so, such as the failure to provide adequate funding, no matter how unlikely, could seriously jeopardise the regime's credibility – both to governments and the wider public.
3. Continuing to develop and more effectively implement the provisions of Article XI on Economic and Technological Development. A large number of States Parties have a particular interest in their implementation. It is an

essential component to ensuring that all States Parties remain actively and fully committed to the regime in future.

4. The ability to mount a credible challenge inspection or investigation of alleged use. One proposal that has periodically been raised is to have a line item in every Programme and Budget for either a practice or actual challenge inspection or investigation of alleged use. A procedural or technical failure in the conduct of such an inspection or investigation could seriously undermine the treaty's credibility.
5. There is a need for the OPCW to remain current on scientific and technological developments, including with regard to trends in the chemical trade and chemical industry. Here it seems as though there is much room for improvement in the tracking of transfers of scheduled chemicals. There should be a continued and more effective use of open-source information. Working-level contacts between the OPCW's constituent organs and other international organizations and bodies which play a role in or have a knowledge of the world's chemical industry should be further developed.

Finally, I would like to refer you to the October 2002 SIPRI policy paper entitled: 'Maintaining the Effectiveness of the Chemical Weapons Convention' which includes a list of recommendations to assist in the effective implementation of the CWC. Two of the recommendations are:

1. The budgetary problems of the OPCW have a significant impact on the operation and implementation of key aspects of the CWC. As far as the problems are structural, the OPCW should adopt a multi-year budget planning cycle, permit the TS to carry over sufficient funds from one year to another, and consider revisions in the current procedures for the reimbursement of inspection costs; and
2. The GPC is of critical importance with regard to the expansion of scope of the CWC to scientific and technological innovation, the criminalization

Thank you.

(Check against delivery)