

***Contributions of the Chemical Weapons Convention
to the Environment and Safety and Security***

States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (the Chemical Weapons Convention or CWC) must fulfil several obligations relating to chemical weapons. They must never develop, produce, acquire, stockpile or use chemical weapons or transfer them to other parties. They must destroy any chemical weapons that they own or possess, or that they abandoned on the territory of another State Party without its consent at any time since 1 January 1925. Furthermore, they must destroy or convert facilities they own or possess which were involved in the production of chemical weapons. Each State Party can determine how to destroy its chemical weapons, however, destruction methods with a high ecological impact are prohibited.

The CWC not only mandates the destruction and prohibition of chemical weapons and related facilities. The treaty also provides for restrictions on international trade in toxic chemicals and precursors that could be used for weapons purposes and monitors through on-site industry inspections that all toxic chemicals, and their precursors, are only used for purposes that are not prohibited. State Parties are required to identify relevant chemical activities and submit declarations regarding these chemicals and industry, which are of varying commercial significance. Complete and accurate declarations by States Parties provide a means to possibly detect theft and or diversion of chemicals for prohibited activities.

Protection of human health and preservation of the environment is one of the primary concerns of the CWC. Therefore, this presentation intends to explore the main concerns related to the environmental impact of the destruction of chemical weapons as well as to show the relationship between the industry verification regime with industrial health, safety and environment.