



Inter-Parliamentary Union
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148th IPU Assembly

Geneva, 23–27 March 2024

Workshop on the Implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention

Tuesday, 26 March 2024, 13:15 – 14:45 - Room 4 of the CICG

Workshop organized in cooperation with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)

Concept note

Despite the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) entering into force more than 25 years ago, implementation varies greatly between regions, subregions, and individual State Parties. Many States Parties refer to their unique circumstances, limited trade in toxic chemicals and lack of significant chemical industry, as reasons for the implementation of the CWC not being seen as a national legislative or policy priority. However, lack of awareness remains a frequently cited reason. These implementation gaps risk undermining the legal framework that the Convention seeks to establish, additionally, no country wants to be the weakest link in the chain. It must be stated that strong application of the CWC nationally is only the first step in creating strong networks that protect populations from misuses. Advocacy therefore plays a crucial role in dispelling these misconceptions, emphasizing that every nation has a responsibility to contribute to a world free from chemical weapons.

Many State Parties have adopted CWC implementing legislation, with 128 fully compliant, 33 partially, and 32 yet to adopt any measures. Gaps in implementation leave the door open for potential abuses, especially in this increasingly turbulent and violent context where misuses of readily accessible chemical materials by States and non-states actors alike could occur where legislative frameworks are not in place to mitigate unprecedented risks from evolving technology. Implementation of the CWC not only serve as a vital tool in preventing the misuse of toxic chemicals. It also highlights comprehensive steps to prosecute violations, further contributing to an effective global safety net against chemical weapons, particularly with respect to violent non-state actors and criminals.

Sustained monitoring and liaising through outreach with all relevant stakeholders in the State Party is key to addressing this issue. Since many of the States Parties without comprehensive national legislation already have draft laws pending approval, the focus now is on sensitising parliamentarians on the need to advance and adopt such legislation as well as implement it. It is within this context that this workshop is being organised, with the aim of enhancing the understanding of the importance of the CWC in advancing peace and security in the world.

Objectives

The event aims to:

- emphasize the critical role that parliaments play in the effective implementation of the CWC towards contributing to global peace, security, and other relevant areas;
- raise awareness on existing variations in CWC implementation among states and regions, with a focus on addressing gaps in awareness, legislation, and compliance.
- address potential misconceptions about the CWC;
- show key linkages between implementing the CWC and addressing the re-emergence of chemical weapons and related threats posed by non-State actors;
- explore ways in which parliamentarians can contribute to ensuring responsiveness to emerging challenges;
- provide an opportunity for networking and open floor discussions to encourage collaboration and exchange of ideas among parliamentarians, experts, and stakeholders.

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The workshop will consist of three main parts:

1. Presentation on Why the Chemical Weapons Convention remains highly relevant for global peace and security”

2. Discussion on Parliamentarians' Role in Championing CWC National Implementation: towards peace, security, and development

3. Interactive Session on Preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons

- 1) Are there specific areas within the existing national legislative framework that you think require additional attention or amendments to better address the evolving nature of chemical weapons threats? (e.g. development, environmental considerations, etc.)
- 2) From your perspective, what challenges do you see in effectively addressing the threats posed by non-State actors regarding chemical weapons?
- 3) In your role as parliamentarians, how can legislative measures be strengthened to ensure robust implementation of the CWC within your country and internationally?
- 4) In your opinion, what role can parliamentary oversight play in ensuring that the country remains vigilant and responsive to emerging challenges related to chemical weapons?
- 5) From your experience, what are the key considerations and priorities that parliamentarians should keep in mind while advocating for measures to prevent the re-emergence of chemical weapons and address threats from non-State actors?

This event will include simultaneous interpretation in English and French. Light snacks and refreshments will be provided.