

WHO Statement for the OPCW CSP-29 2024

Thank you Chair, Director-General,

Distinguished delegates and esteemed colleagues,

It is an honor to address this prominent assembly. On behalf of the World Health Organization (WHO), I extend our sincere appreciation for your tireless efforts and unwavering commitment to the prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons.

WHO firmly believes that international cooperation is crucial in addressing global challenges, particularly those that threaten public health. The devastating impact of the deliberate and malicious use of toxic chemicals on health and the environment highlights the urgent necessity for our collective action.

In the past decade, with the creation of the WHO Health Emergencies Programme, WHO has significantly enhanced its capacity to respond to major events with rapid, agile, and scalable actions under a 'No-regret' policy. Our strength lies in our presence in countries, where we maintain close working relationships with Ministries of Health and their emergency coordination mechanisms. Additionally, our strategic three-level structure supports our countries effectively.

As part of WHO's commitment to global security and health, WHO and Technical Secretariat of the OPCW have initiated a process to formalize its collaboration through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Our aim is to enhance joint efforts at an operational level in the prevention, preparedness, and effective response against the use of toxic chemicals as a weapon, and to protect health from the harmful associated impacts in line with the WHO's objectives set by its World Health Assembly.

Through this MoU, we will seek to provide a clear framework for our partnership; ensuring a mutual understanding of our roles, responsibilities, and expectations; and enhancing our ability to work together more effectively by coordinating our efforts and leveraging each other's expertise and resources.

In alignment with the principles of the International Health Regulations (IHR, 2005) and the WHO Constitution, our partnership with the OPCW will reinforce our shared commitment to safeguarding public health and strengthening global security.

In conclusion, I reiterate WHO's commitment to harmonize our efforts with OPCW and its mission. Through our joint efforts, we can make significant strides in eliminating the use of toxic chemical as a weapon and protecting health from associated impacts.

Let us continue to work together, united in our resolve to create a safer, healthier world for all.

Thank you.

Delivered by Dr Nahoko Shindo, Unit Head, Biosecurity and Health-Security Protection,
WHO Health Emergencies Programme on behalf of WHO on 27 November 2024.