AFE BABALOLA UNIVERSITY, ADO EKITI

DEPARTMENT OF PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES

AN ASSIGNMENT ON:

WEAPONS PROLIFERATION AND MASS DESTRUCTION

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CWC (THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION) IN ELIMINATING CHEMICAL WEAPONS UNDER UNIVERSALLY APPLIED INTERNATIONAL CONTROL

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**INTRODUCTION**

The chemical weapons convention ([CWC](https://www.opcw.org/chemical-weapons-convention)) is one of the [most successful arms control treaties](https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/cwcglance) in existence. . The full name of the treaty is the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction and it is administered by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), an intergovernmental organization based in The Hague, The treaty entered into force on 29 April 1997 in the Netherlands. It outlaws the production, stockpiling or research on offensive lethal chemical weapons. Notably, the treaty not only outlaws the use of chemical weapons, but commits nations to eliminating existing stockpiles of these weapons. This work is carried on under the auspices of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) which oversees verification and inspection efforts. As of May 2018, 193 states have become parties to the CWC and accept its obligations. Israel has signed but not ratified the agreement, while three other UN member states (Egypt, North Korea and South Sudan) have neither signed nor acceded to the treaty. Most recently, the State of Palestine deposited its instrument of accession to the CWC on 17 May 2018. In September 2013 Syria acceded to the convention as part of an agreement for the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons.

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS/EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CWC**

The CWC is unique because it provides for the international verification of the destruction of these weapons and was negotiated with the active participation of the global chemical industry, thus ensuring industry's ongoing cooperation with the CWC's industrial verification regime. A remarkable accomplishment, the CWC is the first disarmament agreement negotiated within a multilateral framework that provides for the elimination of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction under universally applied international control. After the first decade, the 193 signatory nations assembled on the 19th of November at the ([OPCW](https://www.opcw.org/)) in The Hague [for the latest periodic review of the chemical weapons convention](https://www.opcw.org/calendar/csp-23-and-rc-4).

**Accomplishments in the CWC's First Decade**

The CWC made progress on strengthening the regime for chemical weapon disarmament and non-proliferation during its first decade. Experts consider achieving near universal membership within a decade an important CWC accomplishment.

In terms of verification of disarmament, the OPCW reports that, as of March 16, 2007, 100% of declared chemical weapons production facilities have been inactivated and 90% of these facilities have been destroyed or converted to peaceful purposes, 30% of the 8.6 million chemical munitions and containers covered by the CWC have been verifiably destroyed, and almost 25% of the world's declared stockpile of approximately 71,000 metric tons of chemical agent have been verifiably destroyed. Since April 1997, the OPCW conducted 2,800 inspections at 200 chemical weapon-related sites and over 850 industrial sites in 77 States Parties.

Although the CWC faces on-going and new challenges in its second decade, its operations since April 1997 have not suffered the problems the NPT and BWC have had. Unlike the NPT, which has confronted increasing problems related to nuclear proliferation (e.g., North Korea's withdrawal from the NPT and its subsequent nuclear test, and concerns about the proliferation threats posed by Iran's nuclear activities), the CWC has not experienced State Party withdrawal or defection that threatens the treaty's disarmament and non-proliferation objectives. Unlike the failure of the States Parties of the BWC to construct a verification regime, the CWC's verification strategy has produced results the OPCW can build upon in the future. Although the CWC's near universal membership is a source of strength for the treaty, the OPCW Director-General has identified achieving full universality as a future challenge for the CWC. The Middle East is the primary region of concern because it has a number of States that have not joined or signed the CWC (Israel, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria). Although the OPWC Director-General has expressed optimism that Lebanon and Iraq may soon join the CWC, additional progress in the Middle East may be dependent on developments in the Arab-Israeli conflict and the impact in the region of the U.S.-led global war on terrorism.

The CWC required States Parties that possessed chemical weapons to destroy them completely within ten years from the CWC's entry into force (Article IV.6). This objective has not been achieved. Most States Parties possessing chemical weapons arsenals requested extensions on the deadline to finish destruction. In December 2006, the OPCW granted deadline extensions to China and Japan (until 2012, for destruction of chemical weapons abandoned by Japan in China during World War II), India (until 2009), South Korea (until 2008), Libya (until 2010), Russia (until 2012), and the United States (until 2012). The States Parties with the largest chemical weapons stockpiles are the United States and Russia, and experts do not believe that the United States or Russia will meet the 2012 deadline for complete destruction of their chemical weapons arsenals. All States Parties that received extensions have expressed continued commitment to destruction, but the destruction process has proved more difficult and costly for countries than anticipated.

Nonetheless, many believe that the threat posed by chemical weapons has not diminished significantly for three main reasons: a handful of nations suspected of possessing chemical weapons have refused to sign on to the treaty (notably, North Korea, Israel, Syria, Taiwan and Egypt); the vast majority of chemical weapons have not yet been destroyed; and the widespread availability of the precursors and technologies underlying chemical weapons. In response to ongoing fears about the spread of chemical weapons, a group of countries (known as the Australia Group) has established export controls to regulate chemical precursors and coordinate policies regarding current industry practices.

Over the past decade, the United States and Russia have undertaken to destroy their vast, aging stockpiles of chemical weapons. However, the destruction of chemical weapons requires significant financial resources and presents enormous operational and technical complexities. The variety of weapons to be destroyed, daunting technical challenges, program management issues, and community concerns over public health and environmental risks have contributed to delayed progress. Over 65,000 tons of deadly chemical weapons await destruction in Russia and the United States. In the United States, the demilitarization program is now underway at eight facilities, but much work remains. As of the end of 2005, the United States had destroyed just 36 percent of its original stockpile while Russia had destroyed only about 3 percent of its stockpile. In addition, thousands more chemical weapons sit in abandoned or uncharted dumps that date back to the Second World War.

Overall, nations with chemical weapons stockpiles have lagged behind in destroying them as scheduled by the Chemical Weapons Convention: of the 70,000 metric tons of declared weapons agents, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has verified the destruction of only 12,000 tons. If the current pace persists, the Convention's goal to complete the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles will not be met by the extended deadline of 2012.

While much remains to be accomplished, the Chemical Weapons Treaty marks a major milestone in terms of progress toward demilitarization. At the first review conference on implementing the CWT, leaders assessed it as follows: "The Chemical Weapons Convention performs a vital confidence-building role in international society. Reinforced by effective national legislation, the CWC enables its States parties to satisfy themselves that others are not seeking to acquire such weapons. The Convention thus serves a practical goal of enhancing security, a moral goal of eliminating one of the world's most cruel and inhumane weapons, and a political goal of establishing a common forum for reaffirming and strengthening the global taboo on such weapons."

**National implementation**

The OPCW has focused efforts on ensuring that CWC States Parties implement their obligations into national law and policy as required by the treaty (Article VII.1), and these efforts included the Action Plan on National Implementation adopted at the First CWC Review Conference in April 2003. Problems remain with national implementation. For example, only half of the States Parties have adopted comprehensive national legislation to implement their CWC obligations. However, those States Parties that have met their national implementation obligations account for 90% of the world's organic chemical production and trade, so the existing level of national implementation has significant impact on the CWC's objectives. Nevertheless, leading States Parties and the OPCW Director-General favor renewing the Action Plan on National Implementation at the Second CWC Review Conference in April 2008.

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