

# VERIFICATION RESEARCH, TRAINING AND INFORMATION CENTRE

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## **Third Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to review the operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention**

**8-19 April 2013, The Hague, the Netherlands**

Mr Chairman, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

VERTIC believes civil society plays an important supporting role in the work of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in its implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Indeed, VERTIC's involvement with the Convention goes back to well before its entry into force, and we continue to support its primary objective – ridding the world once and for all of the scourge of chemical weapons.

VERTIC's mission is the effective verification and implementation of international agreements, including the Chemical Weapons Convention. VERTIC's National Implementation Measures Programme, or NIM Programme, advises States on their national implementation obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention, as well as under the Biological Weapons Convention and certain international instruments to secure nuclear and other radioactive material. We also prepare legislation surveys for countries around the world of their existing legislation to implement these international instruments, as well as UN Security Council Resolution 1540. The NIM Programme provides cost-free legislative assistance to interested States, through review and comment on existing draft legislation or through the provision of co-operative assistance in the drafting of new legislation during workshops in capitals.

VERTIC closely works with and co-ordinates its efforts with several international organisations, agencies and initiatives such as the OPCW, the BWC Implementation Support Unit and BWC Action (funded by the EU Council), the UN Security Council 1540 Committee and its Experts, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, and the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs together with its regional arms such as UNLirec.

We also work closely with other civil society actors. We believe that civil society has an important role to play in ensuring the effectiveness of the Chemical Weapons Convention. From awareness-raising to assistance, a diverse group of civil society actors around the world initiate and carry out activities at the national, regional and international levels to promote science and technological development with the objective of a world free of chemical weapons.



VERTIC has prepared materials that demonstrate our contribution to this goal, which are available during this Review Conference. There is a National Implementation Measures CD with a number of national implementation documents in several languages. You will also find at our table copies of blog posts we have prepared on the legal issues involved with Syria's chemical and alleged biological weapons programmes. All of these materials are also available on our website ([www.vertic.org](http://www.vertic.org)).

VERTIC strongly supports the adoption of appropriate legislation to implement the Chemical Weapons Convention. Robust national implementing measures ensure that States can first, investigate, prosecute and punish any offences, including preparations, associated with chemical weapons; secondly, monitor and supervise any activities, including transfers, involving scheduled chemicals; thirdly, enhance national security and public health and safety, and lastly; strongly signal to potential investors that the State is a safe and responsible location for work with toxic chemicals.

The decisions that are taken during this Conference will have an effect on the operation of the Convention for the next five years. As the OPCW's activities relating to destruction of chemical weapons will continue to decrease during that time, the importance of its support for activities relating to preventing their re-emergence will increase. Given this upcoming shift in emphasis, we call upon the States Parties to give due consideration to the importance of national implementation of the Convention during this Review Conference, and to take a strong decision on this topic accordingly.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.