

CHEMICAL WEAPONS WORKING GROUP

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U.S. AVOIDS PENALTIES FOR MISSING WEAPONS DESTRUCTION DEADLINES

Agreement Reached to Complete Destruction in "The Shortest Time Possible"

The Hague, NL: The Berea based Chemical Weapons Working Group's director, Craig Williams, returned from The Hague, Netherlands on Friday with good news – The United States will not be sanctioned or penalized for missing the extended deadline of 29 April 2012 for destruction of its Chemical Weapons.

Williams was in The Hague this week to present the status of the Kentucky effort on chemical weapons disposal to the Conference of State Parties of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

Invited and sponsored by the USA's Global Green Legacy Project, in partnership with former Russian President Gorbachev's Green Cross International, Williams was asked to provide information pertaining to the progress being made by the Kentucky disposal project.

Three countries with declared stockpiles of chemical weapons; the U.S., Russia and Libya, have acknowledged that they will not be able to meet the deadline required by the Treaty. Thus, negotiations have been underway to determine what actions the OPCW might take in this regard.

The Executive Council of the OPCW brought forward a declaration calling for the Executive Council to meet immediately after the April 29 2012 deadline passes next year. At that session, the panel would receive a briefing from OCPW Director General Ahmet Üzümcü regarding the amounts of chemical weapons that have been eliminated and those that remain in the three nations. Each of the possessor nations would be required at the council meeting to deliver a "detailed plan for the destruction of its remaining chemical weapons, which are to be destroyed *in the shortest time possible*," the declaration states. The plans must offer specific dates by which chemical weapons disposal operations are expected to be completed. The states must then undertake necessary activities to meet those schedules.

The Declaration passed by a vote of 101-1, with Iran casting the only "no" vote.

Also required would be specifics on the types and amounts of warfare agents to be destroyed each year for all operating and planned disposal plants, along with a count of active and anticipated plants.

Each nation and the OPCW director general would also be required to submit reports at every Executive Council meeting on progress in the demilitarization efforts. Additional reports would be delivered at the annual meetings of the full membership to the convention.

"Other than the political grandstanding by Iran, there was consensus on the good-faith efforts of the U.S. to continue destroying weapons," Williams said. "Kentucky's position was made clear – we are supportive of the current project and will do all we can to abide by the revised requirements set forth at the Hague meeting," he said.