**Delegate: Naz Erdem**

**Country: French Republic**

**Committee: DISEC**

**Agenda Item: The Regulation of Chemical Weapon Possession and Usage**

A Chemical Weapon is a chemical used to cause intentional death or harm through its toxic properties. Munitions, devices, and other equipment specifically designed to weaponize toxic chemicals also fall under the definition of chemical weapons(1). The CW agents used in warfare are classified as Nerve agents, Vesicants (blistering agents), Blood agents (cyanogenic agents), Choking agents (pulmonary agents), Riot-control agents (tear gases), Psychomimetic agents, and Toxins. All of these agents possess different characteristics which could be inferred from their names. Chemical weapons have a long, lethal history. Accounts of ancient chemical warfare date back as far as the 12th century B.C. Even though chemical weapons were always used since those times, they started getting more popular and advanced in the 19th century, making them one of the most destructive weapons in the world(2). During World War I, the employment of these poisonous substances—such as lewisites, sulfur mustard, and phosgene—caused 1.2 million casualties and 100,000 fatalities. Millions of innocent civilians were killed by the Nazis with Zyklon B gas during World War II. As the French Republic, we are aware of the crucial role chemical weapons play in wars and we wish to put an end to this form of mass destruction.

 The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the first multilateral disarmament pact in history to call for the abolition of a whole class of weapons of mass destruction, came into effect on April 29, 1997, making history. On January 13, 1993, the CWC was made available for signature in Paris, and on April 29, 1997, it came into effect. It currently has 193 state parties(3). OPCW is the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. The ultimate aim of the OPCW is to achieve a world permanently free of chemical weapons and to contribute to international security and stability, general and complete disarmament, and global economic development(4). The Australia Group (AG) is a group of 42 countries and the European Union dedicated to preventing the spread and proliferation of chemical and biological weapons through the coordination of export control policies(5)

 Although France used chemical weapons in the past, we have improved ourselves for the better and the lives of innocent people. France developed and used chemical weapons in WWI and maintained stockpiles of mustard gas and phosgene at the beginning of WWII. During the 1960s, France also manufactured and stockpiled significant quantities of Sarin and VX nerve agents. In a 1988 speech to the United Nations, then President François Mitterrand asserted that France had no chemical weapons and would produce none in the future. France ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) on 2 March 1995 and is a member of the Australia Group(6). The Government of France has contributed €1.7M to several trust funds of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and is a member of the Executive Council(7). The program SECOIA (Destruction Site of Weapons Identified as Old) was imposed by a legislative decree in December 1996. It designates the destruction of all old chemical weapons to the French Ministry of Defence(8).

 As the French Republic, we think that all countries should come together to solve this issue of chemical weapons since it is highly crucial for the well-being of our citizens. A variety of solutions are needed to address the usage and regulation of chemical weapons. Nations must cooperate and abide by conventions such as the CWC. This includes stopping individuals who disobey the rules and being more forthright about what they have. Enhancing methods for verifying and upholding these agreements is also crucial. To apprehend anyone attempting to manufacture or distribute these lethal weapons, we may pool intelligence and leverage cutting-edge technologies. It's also critical to fund research on defense mechanisms against chemical attacks and protective equipment. Furthermore, spreading awareness of the horrific consequences of chemical weapons might strengthen opposition to their deployment on a worldwide scale.

**REFERENCES**

1. What is a Chemical Weapon? (n.d.). OPCW. <https://www.opcw.org/our-work/what-chemical-weapon>
2. Blakemore, E., & Blakemore, E. (2018, September 1). The History of Chemical Weapons Use Goes Back to the Ancient World. HISTORY. <https://www.history.com/news/syria-chemical-weapons-history-facts>
3. Chemical – UNODA. (n.d.). <https://disarmament.unoda.org/chemical/#:~:text=Convention%20on%20the%20Prohibition%20of,Geneva%20on%203%20September%201992>.
4. Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. (2024, March 4). OPCW. <https://www.opcw.org>
5. Sonde, F. (2023, March 16). Fact Sheet: The Australia Group. Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation. <https://armscontrolcenter.org/fact-sheet-the-australia-group/>
6. France Overview. (2021, October 21). The Nuclear Threat Initiative. <https://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/france-overview/>
7. France contributes €1.7M to OPCW trust funds. (n.d.). OPCW. <https://www.opcw.org/media-centre/news/2023/05/france-contributes-eu17m-opcw-trust-funds>
8. How Does France Manage Old Chemical Weapons? | Robin des Bois. (n.d.). <https://robindesbois.org/en/comment-la-france-gere-t-elle-les-munitions-chimiques-anciennes/>