

disarmament forum

The CWC Review Conference

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The first Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) offers an important opportunity for both reflection on the first five years of its implementation and planning for the future. The world is not the same as it was at the entry into force of the convention in 1997. We have seen radical changes in science and technology, which might lead to the development of new weapons or raise concerns about how well novel chemicals are incorporated by the CWC. Threat perceptions have also altered—to many people, a terrorist attack using chemical weapons seems much more likely today than it did only a few years ago. The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has also undergone a period of change. Over these early years numerous organizational issues, concerning budgeting, decision-making, long-term planning, and the involvement of Member States in the OPCW's work, have arisen. How the CWC and the OPCW can adapt or respond to these changes will determine how well the strategic intent of the convention is met in the longer term and the health of the chemical weapons disarmament and non-proliferation regime in general.

In this issue of *Disarmament Forum*, experts weigh in with proposals and recommendations for the Review Conference and the post-conference period, discussing specific concerns such as universality, verification, transparency, the general purpose criterion, developments in non-lethal weapons, and institutional issues. A short reference section includes a variety of additional reading on this topic.

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