



## WHAT IS THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION?

The Chemical Weapons Convention is an international disarmament and arms control treaty that, when it comes into force, will ban the development, production, stockpiling, transfer and use of chemical weapons. To monitor compliance with this ban, the treaty will establish an international body, called the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), with its headquarters in The Hague, the Netherlands. States that are party to the Convention will set up National Authorities to collect information relevant to the Convention and to cooperate with the OPCW in ensuring compliance in their countries.

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The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) was opened for signature in Paris in January 1993 and has now been signed by almost 160 countries. The Entry into Force (EIF) of the CWC will occur 180 days after 65 countries have ratified it. Upon EIF, governments will have to declare certain information to the OPCW concerning activities in their countries that are relevant to the Convention, and facilities producing certain chemicals will be liable to on-site verification inspections by teams of international inspectors.

The chemicals subject to verification measures have been listed in three Schedules:

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**SCHEDULE 1** - Chemicals known to be chemical warfare agents and some of their key precursors. Schedule 1 chemicals, produced for end-uses not prohibited under the Convention, can only be traded with other States Parties to the CWC under strict procedures requiring advance notification and detailed declarations of information;

**SCHEDULE 2** - Chemicals and compounds that are key precursors to chemical warfare agents but that have some commercial utility (for example, in insecticides, herbicides, lubricants and pharmaceutical products). For an interim period of three years following entry into force, transfers of Schedule 2 chemicals to non-States Parties will be conditional upon provision of end-use certificates and non-retransfer undertakings. Following the interim period, transfers to non-States Parties are prohibited;

