

Under the terms of the Chemical Weapons Convention, which entered into force in April 1997, Russia has agreed to destroy its chemical weapons stockpile. However, an initial lack of resources has meant that Russia will not be able to meet the CWC's final destruction deadline of 2007. As permitted under the Convention, Russia has requested a five-year extension of its final destruction deadline, but even so there is a need for international assistance to complete this important task in a timely fashion.

Complying with the Chemical Weapons Convention

Compliance with the terms of the CWC requires possessor countries to destroy their CW stockpiles not later than 10 years after the Convention's entry into force (i.e. by April 29, 2007). Although a State Party can choose its own destruction methods, there is an obligation under the CWC to "assign the highest priority to ensuring the safety of people and to protecting the environment." The Convention also determines a rate and sequence for destruction, and destruction of all stocks is verified through the continuous on-site presence of inspectors from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. The 2007 deadline for the final destruction of national stockpiles may be extended to 2012 in exceptional circumstances.

The international community's support for Russia's CW destruction efforts pre-dates the *Global Partnership*. Russia's first chemical weapons destruction facility (CWDF) was established at Gornyy with significant assistance from Germany. That facility, which destroys blister agents, became operational in December 2002. Russia expects that the completion of two more CWDFs, at Kambarka and Maradykovsky, will enable it to destroy 20 percent of its stock by 2007. Up to four more facilities are planned or in progress. The Shchuch'ye CWDF, which Canada is helping to fund, is expected to be operational in 2008.

"The destruction of chemical weapons is a high priority for Canada under the Global Partnership. Not only will destruction of Russia's chemical weapons stores enhance international security and safety by helping to prevent terrorists, or those that harbour them, from acquiring chemical weapons, it will also help Russia to meet its Chemical Weapons Convention obligations, thereby strengthening multilateral non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament efforts."

—Green Cross National Forum—Canadian Statement, Moscow, November 12, 2003.



Computer generated image of the Shchuch'ye Chemical Weapons Destruction Facility

Photo Credit: US Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA)

International cooperation at work

"Many Global Partnership countries are supporting projects related to chemical weapons destruction. Cooperation projects begun in previous years have led to the destruction of over 640 tons of chemical weapons. Canada, the European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Russia, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States are making contributions to chemical weapons destruction at sites including Gornyy, Shchuch'ye and Kambarka."

—G8 Senior Group, G8 Global Partnership Annual Report, June 2004.