

2. Irreversible neutralization procedures

The irreversible neutralization of production facilities should comprise two phases: a mothballing or decommissioning phase, and a destruction/conversion phase.

(a) Decommissioning

The production facilities defined in items (a.1), (a.2), (a.3) and (b) above should be sealed under international control as soon as possible after the entry into force of the convention.

(b) Destruction/conversion

It is unquestionably simpler to destroy the production facilities defined above. However, economic imperatives may militate in favour of conversion to civilian use, or even to military use (for example, convention munitions). Each type of factory is, in fact, a special case that must be studied separately, but it must be clear that, by comparison with destruction, conversion implies increased international surveillance in view of the risks of circumvention of the provisions of the convention.

(b.1) Facilities for the manufacture of lethal supertoxic substances or of incapacitating agents

We have seen that such plants are either isolated or, on the contrary, part of a larger complex. In all cases, their vocation is solely military.

With regard to isolated production facilities, two hypotheses are possible:

One or more factories are converted for the purposes of stock destruction;

The remainder are destroyed.

Conversion to other uses would be a possibility for factories forming part of a complex, but the interior would have to be dismantled and the key parts (reactor vessels, distillation columns, etc.) scrapped. The building would have to be properly detoxified and dechemicalized before being reused.

(b.2) Facilities for the manufacture of key precursors for supertoxic substances

Such facilities are either military factories or civilian factories that have concluded contracts with the armed forces. They include factories that manufacture key precursors for binary or multicomponent weapons.

In the first case (arsenals), the facilities should be subject to the regulations described in (b.1).

In the second case (civilian factories), the facility may, if the precursor in question is a single-purpose precursor (that is, one which can only serve to produce a supertoxic substance), be converted to non-hostile uses and placed on the list of facilities subject to routine checking. If the precursor is a dual-purpose precursor, the factory will be placed on the list of facilities subject to routine checking.