

8th May 2007

PRESS INVITATION

INTERNATIONAL CHEMICAL WEAPONS DEMILITARISATION CONFERENCE

Dstl hosts 10th Chemical Weapons Demilitarisation Conference
Le Plaza Hotel, Brussels, Belgium, 14 – 18 May 2007
Press Days 15th and 16th May 2007

UK Defence scientists will host the 2007 international Chemical Weapons Demilitarisation Conference in Belgium between the 14th and 18th May. This year's Conference marks the 10th anniversary of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the year in which the UK has met the obligations under the treaty by destroying the last of the UK's known old (pre-1946) chemical weapons.

Since the CWC came into force, the UK's Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) has hosted an annual international Chemical Weapon Demilitarisation (CWD) conference. The event allows experts from all over the world to participate in discussions on the global issues surrounding the disposal of chemical weapons and to improve international co-operation.

This year's event has already attracted over 180 delegates from 15 countries. Statements of progress will be made during the conference by Ambassador Rogelio Pfirter, Director General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the UK, US, Belgium, Canada, Japan, Albania and Switzerland.

The Armed Forces Minister, Adam Ingram, is due to give a key address to the Conference. Mr Ingram said: "The annual CWD conference is a unique opportunity for international experts to exchange ideas and knowledge about demilitarisation. I am proud to be associated with it again this year, shortly after the UK has successfully met its obligation to complete destruction of its own old chemical weapons.

"Our goal is a world without Chemical Weapons. We call upon all states to destroy their stockpiles, including old legacy weapons, as soon as possible, within the deadlines set by the Convention."

"Since the Chemical Weapons Convention came into force 10 years ago, Britain has played a leading role in helping achieve its aim of banning all chemical weapons. To date 182 states have joined the Convention, and some 2.67 million munitions have been destroyed."

It has been almost ninety years since the end of the First World War, but its legacy of chemical weapons still overshadows countries worldwide. The world's scientists played a key role in developing these chemical weapons, but now they are involved in destroying them as cleanly and safely as possible. A highlight of the conference will be a tour of the battlefields at Ypres in Belgium, where chemical weapons were first deployed in WW1.

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Notes to Editors:

Chemical Weapons Demilitarisation (CWD) Conference

The conference is unique in that it is entirely devoted to Chemical Weapons Demilitarisation. CWD 2007, the tenth of these series of conferences, will be hosted by the UK's Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl). The conference will be co-hosted by two US companies SAIC & Versar Inc.

A number of technical experts from the UK, US, Russia, Belgium, Canada, Japan, Albania and Switzerland will be presenting papers at CWD 2007. The agenda will focus on the global challenges and successes experienced during the last ten years. In addition a variety of issues will be covered in separate sessions which will include techniques for search and recovery, identification of agent and the final destruction and safe disposal.

Press Day

Press are more than welcome to attend the conference on the 15th and 16th May 2007. The diplomatic statements and collaboration sessions will be made on the 15th May. There will also be an opportunity to speak to international experts in the field of chemical weapons demilitarisation. Please give Annabel Mead a call if you wish to pre-book interviews with Dstl's experts or express an interest in interviewing our international partners. On the 16th May, press are invited to join the conference on a visit to Ypres where chemical weapons were first deployed. Ypres houses the biggest British Military cemetery in the world.

If you wish to attend on the 15th or 16th May, please give Annabel Mead a call on 01980 614114. **Please register your interest as soon as possible.** For more information about CWD 2007, including details of how to get there and accommodation please visit

<http://www.dstl.gov.uk/conferences/cwd/2007/index.php>

Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)

The CWC entered into force in 1997 and requires all signatories to dispose of chemical weapons and their production facilities. This includes both old and abandoned weapons, as well as stockpiles.

Currently, 182 states have joined the CWC; only 13 are yet to join. The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, based in The Hague, is responsible for implementation of the Convention. For more information please visit http://www.opcw.org/en/CWC_intro.html

About Dstl

Dstl (the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory) is the centre of scientific excellence for the Ministry of Defence, housing one of the largest groups of scientists and engineers in public service in the country. Its 3,500 strong workforce includes some of the nation's most talented and creative scientists with the brief to ensure that the UK Armed Forces and Government are supported in-house by world class scientific advice. Dstl delivers defence research, specialist technical services and the ability to track global technological developments. Its capabilities compare with the best in the world, supporting defence policy making and operations and procurement decisions. For more information visit

www.dstl.gov.uk.

Demilitarisation at Dstl

Any chemical munitions found in the UK are sent to Dstl Porton Down for their safe disposal, where the last of the UK's known 3812 chemical weapons was recently destroyed. Dstl houses the only licensed UK facility for the receipt, storage, investigation and disposal of all old chemical weapons in the UK. Although all known old chemical weapons have been destroyed, further small quantities of such weapons could be unearthed in the future and they too will come to Dstl Porton Down for their safe disposal.