



GUIDELINES FOR DRAFTING OPCW DECISIONS
AUGUST 11 - 15

WFUNA

Email: globalmodelun@wfuna.org

Phone: +41 (0) 22 917 32 74

Instagram: @globalmodel

GLOBAL MODEL UN **SINGAPORE** 2026

GUIDELINES DRAFTING

ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL
WEAPONS (OPCW) DECISIONS

PREFACE

The **Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction**, commonly known as the **Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)**, is one of the world's most successful multilateral disarmament treaties. Since it entered into force in 1997, it has created a global legal framework that prohibits the development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, transfer, and use of chemical weapons. At the same time, it promotes international cooperation in the peaceful uses of chemistry. Today, nearly every country in the world is a State Party to the Convention, reflecting a shared commitment that chemical weapons have no place in the modern world.

The Convention does more than prohibit chemical weapons. It requires States Parties to put its obligations into practice. Governments must adopt national laws, establish National Authorities, regulate relevant chemicals, submit declarations, prepare for inspections, and cooperate with other States Parties. As science and technology continue to advance, they must also ensure that these measures remain effective.

The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) supports this work. It verifies compliance with the Convention, provides technical assistance, promotes international cooperation, and serves as the forum where States Parties meet to review implementation and make decisions. Together, the Convention and the OPCW form a system that helps prevent the re-emergence of chemical weapons while encouraging the peaceful use of chemistry.

Every Conference decision adopted by consensus helps advance the goal that chemistry is used only for peaceful purposes and that scientific progress should benefit humanity rather than contribute to conflict. By understanding how those decisions are developed, negotiated, and implemented, readers will gain a deeper understanding of both the Convention and the practice of multilateral diplomacy.

There are no publications that provide guidelines on how to use the Convention to develop and negotiate Decisions at meetings of the Conference of the States Parties. That practical skill is the focus of this guide.

As you draft preambular and operative paragraphs, the following questions should be uppermost in your mind:

- **What issue are we trying to address?**
- **What actions need to be taken?**
- **Which provisions of the Convention provide the legal basis for these actions?**
- **Who has the primary responsibility for implementing the actions that are recommended?**

These questions will help you develop recommendations that are realistic, legally sound, and consistent with the responsibilities assigned by the Convention.

WHY THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION EXISTS

"...our work is not finished. The appalling use of chemical weapons has continued, and rapid developments in science and technology threaten to make their acquisition and use even easier. We cannot allow this to continue.

In the name of all victims of chemical warfare, I urge States to reaffirm their commitment to a world free of these repugnant weapons."

— **António Guterres**

Secretary-General of the United Nations

Message for the Day of Remembrance for All Victims of Chemical Warfare

30 November 2025

Introduction

The Convention seeks to prevent that misuse of chemistry while protecting the many benefits that chemistry provides.

Unlike many international agreements that regulate or limit particular weapons, the Convention prohibits an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. States Parties agree never to develop, produce, acquire, stockpile, transfer, or use chemical weapons. They also agree to destroy any chemical weapons and production facilities under their jurisdiction or control.

The Convention does more than prohibit chemical weapons. It also promotes international cooperation in the peaceful uses of chemistry. It recognizes that scientific progress, economic development, and international security support one another rather than compete with one another.

Since it entered into force on 29 April 1997, the Convention has become one of the most widely supported disarmament treaties in history. Nearly every country in the world is now a State Party, demonstrating a global consensus that chemical weapons are unacceptable under any circumstances.

From Treaty to Action

The Convention cannot achieve its goals on its own. Its success depends on the actions of the States Parties.

Each government must put the Convention into practice by adopting national legislation, establishing a National Authority, regulating relevant chemicals, submitting declarations, facilitating inspections, and cooperating with other States Parties.

The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) supports these efforts. It verifies compliance with the Convention, provides technical assistance, promotes international cooperation, and serves as the forum where States Parties work together to implement the Convention.

This creates a partnership.

States Parties have the primary responsibility for implementing the Convention. The OPCW provides the institutional framework that helps them meet those responsibilities through verification, cooperation, and collective decision-making.

Understanding this partnership is essential for anyone participating in the work of the OPCW.

Whether you are serving as a government representative, a member of a National Authority, an official of the Technical Secretariat, or a delegate in a Model OPCW conference, effective participation begins with understanding the Convention's purpose, structure, and institutions.

This document is designed to build that understanding. Rather than treating the Convention only as a legal document, it explains how its provisions are translated into practical decisions that strengthen implementation.

The Three Pillars of the Convention

The Convention rests on three pillars that work together to achieve a single goal: preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons while promoting the peaceful uses of chemistry.

These pillars are not separate priorities. They reinforce one another. Together they provide the framework for the work of the OPCW and for the responsibilities carried out by States Parties.

Pillar One

Prohibition and Elimination of Chemical Weapons

The Convention establishes a complete prohibition on chemical weapons.

States Parties undertake never to develop, produce, acquire, stockpile, retain, transfer, or use chemical weapons under any circumstances. They also agree to destroy existing chemical weapons and chemical weapons production facilities under international verification.

This prohibition forms both the legal and moral foundation of the Convention.

Without it, the remaining provisions of the Convention would have no purpose.

Pillar Two

Verification and Compliance

The Convention depends upon trust, but trust alone is not enough.

States Parties strengthen confidence in one another by submitting declarations, accepting inspections, and implementing agreed verification measures.

The OPCW oversees this verification system to provide assurance that States Parties are meeting their obligations.

Verification does more than detect non-compliance. It also builds confidence among States Parties by demonstrating that commitments are being implemented fairly and consistently.

Pillar Three

International Cooperation and the Peaceful Uses of Chemistry

The Convention recognizes that chemistry plays a vital role in economic development, scientific research, medicine, agriculture, and industry.

Preventing chemical weapons should not limit these peaceful activities.

Instead, the Convention encourages scientific exchange, technical assistance, education, capacity-building, and international cooperation that support peaceful chemical activities while remaining consistent with the Convention.

Security and scientific progress therefore reinforce one another.

Why the Three Pillars Matter

Nearly every issue considered by the Conference of the States Parties can be linked to one or more of these three pillars.

For example, Conference decisions often address:

- national implementation;
- scientific and technological developments;
- assistance and protection;
- education and outreach;
- capacity-building;
- international cooperation;
- peaceful uses of chemistry.

Although these topics may appear unrelated, each supports one or more of the Convention's three pillars.

Recognizing these connections helps delegates understand why such a wide range of issues appears on the Conference agenda.

It also helps them develop recommendations that strengthen the Convention as a whole rather than addressing individual issues in isolation.

Delegate Tip

Before drafting a recommendation, ask yourself:

Which of the Convention's three pillars does this proposal support?

Many successful Conference decisions strengthen more than one pillar.

For example, improving the work of National Authorities strengthens national implementation, supports verification, and often increases international cooperation.

Key Takeaways

- The Chemical Weapons Convention prohibits an entire category of weapons of mass destruction.

- States Parties have the primary responsibility for implementing the Convention.
- The OPCW supports implementation through verification, technical assistance, and international cooperation.
- The Convention is built on three mutually reinforcing pillars:
 - Prohibition and Elimination of Chemical Weapons
 - Verification and Compliance
 - International Cooperation and the Peaceful Uses of Chemistry
- Most Conference decisions strengthen one or more of these three pillars.

Looking Ahead

The Convention establishes the legal obligations of States Parties, but understanding those obligations requires knowing how the treaty is organized.

The next section explains how the Convention's Articles, Annexes, and Schedules work together to create a legal framework for eliminating chemical weapons while promoting the peaceful uses of chemistry.

UNDERSTANDING THE STRUCTURE OF THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION

Introduction

The Chemical Weapons Convention is a comprehensive legal treaty made up of **24 Articles, three Annexes, and three Schedules of Chemicals**. Together, these parts establish the rights and obligations of States Parties, create the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), and describe how the Convention is implemented and verified.

For many new delegates, the Convention can seem long and technical. The good news is that most Conference of the States Parties (CSP) decisions rely on a relatively small number of Articles. Once you understand how the Convention is organized, it becomes much easier to find the provisions that relate to your topic.

This chapter explains the purpose of each part of the Convention and shows you where to begin your research.

The Four Main Parts of the Convention

The Convention has four main components:

1. The Articles
2. The Verification Annex
3. The Confidentiality Annex
4. The Schedules of Chemicals

Each serves a different purpose, but together they create a complete legal framework for preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons.

1. The Articles

The Articles form the legal foundation of the Convention.

They define the obligations of States Parties, establish the structure of the OPCW, and describe how the Convention operates.

The Articles answer questions such as:

- What activities are prohibited?
- What must States Parties do to implement the Convention?
- What are the responsibilities of the OPCW?
- How are decisions made?
- What happens if a State Party fails to comply?

For delegates, the Articles provide the legal basis for almost every Conference decision.

2. The Verification Annex

The Verification Annex explains how many of the Convention's legal obligations are carried out.

It contains detailed procedures for:

- declarations;
- inspections;
- destruction of chemical weapons;
- destruction of production facilities;
- inspections of industrial facilities;
- challenge inspections.

While the Articles establish legal obligations, the Verification Annex explains the procedures used to implement them.

Most delegates will not need to read the entire Annex. Instead, they should consult only the sections that relate directly to the recommendations they are drafting.

3. The Confidentiality Annex

The OPCW receives sensitive information from governments and the chemical industry.

The Confidentiality Annex establishes rules for protecting that information. It covers:

- confidential business information;
- inspection reports;
- data handling;
- access to information;
- protection of sensitive documents.

Unless a committee is discussing confidentiality or information management, delegates are unlikely to use this Annex when drafting a Conference decision.

4. The Schedules of Chemicals

The Convention includes three Schedules of Chemicals.

These schedules do not prohibit chemicals themselves. Instead, they identify chemicals that require different levels of declaration, transfer controls, and verification because they may be used for both peaceful and prohibited purposes.

The Schedules determine:

- declaration requirements;
- transfer requirements;
- inspection requirements;
- verification measures.

Delegates do not need to memorize the chemicals listed in each Schedule. It is more important to understand why the schedules exist and how they support the Convention's verification system.

How the Parts Work Together

One way to understand the Convention is to compare it to building a house.

The **Articles** are the blueprint. They establish the legal framework, define responsibilities, and describe what must be achieved.

The **Annexes** are the construction manual. They explain how the legal obligations are carried out in practice by providing technical procedures for inspections, verification, and the protection of confidential information.

The **Schedules** identify the chemicals that require different levels of monitoring under those procedures.

When drafting a Conference decision, delegates will usually begin with the blueprint—the Articles. Only when a recommendation involves technical implementation will they need to consult the Verification Annex or the Schedules.

Thinking about the Convention in this way helps delegates focus on the parts that are most relevant to their work.

The Articles You Will Use Most Often

Although the Convention contains 24 Articles, delegates drafting Conference decisions usually rely on a much smaller group.

Article I — General Obligations

Article I establishes the core commitment of every State Party: never to develop, produce, acquire, stockpile, transfer, or use chemical weapons.
Most recommendations can ultimately be traced back to this Article.

Article III — Declarations

Requires States Parties to submit declarations concerning chemical weapons, production facilities, and certain chemical activities.
Consult this Article when discussing transparency or declarations.

Article IV — Chemical Weapons

Describes the destruction of chemical weapons.

Article V — Chemical Weapons Production Facilities

Describes the destruction or conversion of former production facilities.

Article VI — Activities Not Prohibited Under the Convention

Article VI provides the legal framework for peaceful chemical activities.
It addresses:

- industrial declarations;
- inspections;
- scheduled chemicals;
- verification of legitimate chemical activities.

Article VII — National Implementation Measures

Article VII is one of the most frequently cited Articles in Conference Decisions.

It requires each State Party to:

- adopt implementing legislation;
- establish a National Authority;
- prohibit prohibited activities under national law;
- cooperate with the OPCW.

Article VIII — The Organisation

Article VIII establishes the OPCW and defines the responsibilities of:

- the Conference of the States Parties;
- the Executive Council;
- the Technical Secretariat.

Before assigning a new task to the Technical Secretariat, delegates should always review Article VIII.

Article IX — Consultations, Cooperation and Fact-Finding

Article IX provides procedures for:

- consultations between States Parties;
- clarification requests;
- challenge inspections;
- cooperation to resolve compliance concerns.

Article X — Assistance and Protection

Article X promotes international cooperation to improve protection against chemical weapons.

Recommendations concerning emergency preparedness, training, and assistance often rely on this Article.

Article XI — Economic and Technological Development

Article XI promotes international cooperation in the peaceful uses of chemistry.

Delegates discussing scientific cooperation, capacity-building, or technology transfer will frequently cite this Article.

Article XII — Measures to Redress a Situation and Ensure Compliance

Article XII describes the actions the Conference may take when a State Party seriously fails to comply with the Convention.

This Article is most relevant when a Conference decision addresses compliance.

Reading the Convention Efficiently

You do not need to read the Convention from beginning to end before drafting recommendations.

Instead, begin with the Article that relates to your topic.

If your recommendation concerns...	Begin with...
National legislation	Article VII
National Authorities	Article VII
Technical Secretariat responsibilities	Article VIII
Compliance concerns	Article IX
Emergency preparedness	Article X
International cooperation	Article XI
Scheduled chemicals	Article VI
Inspections	Articles VI and IX, then the Verification Annex

This approach will save time and help you focus on the legal provisions that support your recommendation.

What Can Most Delegates Skip?

Most delegates do **not** need to study:

- detailed destruction procedures;
- inspection logistics;
- equipment specifications;
- administrative forms;
- technical inspection protocols.

These provisions are essential for inspectors, but they rarely influence the policy decisions adopted by the Conference.

Delegate Tip

Do not try to memorize the Convention.

Instead, learn **where to find the information you need**.

Experienced delegates know how to locate the relevant Articles quickly. That skill is far more valuable than memorizing technical details.

Key Takeaways

- The Convention consists of 24 Articles, three Annexes, and three Schedules of Chemicals.
- The Articles provide the legal basis for most Conference decisions.
- The Verification Annex explains how many Convention obligations are implemented.
- The Confidentiality Annex protects sensitive information.
- The Schedules identify chemicals that require different levels of monitoring; they do not prohibit the chemicals themselves.
- Most Conference decisions rely on only a small number of Articles.
- Begin your research with the Articles that relate to your recommendation instead of reading the Convention from beginning to end.

Looking Ahead

Knowing how the Convention is organized is only the first step.

The next section explains how to identify the Convention Articles that support a recommendation and how to use those Articles when drafting preambular and operative paragraphs for a Conference decision.

FINDING THE RIGHT CONVENTION ARTICLES FOR YOUR RECOMMENDATION

Introduction

A good Conference decision begins with the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Many new delegates make the same mistake. They decide what they want to recommend and begin writing operative paragraphs without first identifying the Convention Articles that support their proposal.

Experienced delegates take the opposite approach.

They begin by asking:

Which Article of the Convention provides the legal basis for this recommendation?

Once they identify the relevant Article or Articles, they explain why those provisions matter in the preambular paragraphs and then draft recommendations that strengthen their implementation.

This approach produces recommendations that are realistic, legally grounded, and consistent with established OPCW practice.

This chapter explains how to make that connection.

A Four-Step Drafting Process

Every recommendation in this handbook follows the same four-step process.

Step 1: Identify the Issue

Start by defining the problem you want to address.

For example:

- National legislation is outdated.
- Customs officials need additional training.
- Scientific advances create new risks.
- Emergency preparedness should be strengthened.
- States Parties need greater technical cooperation.

Be as specific as possible. A clearly defined problem is easier to solve than a broad one.

Step 2: Identify the Relevant Convention Article

Next, ask yourself:

Which Article of the Convention already addresses this issue?

Nearly every recommendation can be linked to one or more Articles.

For example:

Issue	Convention Article
National Implementation	Article VII
Peaceful chemical activities	Article VI
Responsibilities of the Technical Secretariat	Article VIII
Emergency preparedness	Article X
International cooperation	Article XI

If more than one article applies, use them together.

Step 3: Reference the Article in a Preambular Paragraph

Referencing an Article in a preambular paragraph can help prepare the reader for a recommendation linked to that Article in an operative paragraph. For example:

Recalling paragraph 37 of Article VIII of the Convention that the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter “the Secretariat”) shall carry out the verification measures provided for in the Convention; explain why the recommendation is important;

Doing this helps answer the question why a particular recommendation mentioned in an operative paragraph is consistent with the Convention.

Step 4: Draft a Practical Recommendation

Only after completing the first three steps should you begin writing operative paragraphs.

Most Conference decisions do **not** create new treaty obligations.

Instead, they encourage States Parties or the Technical Secretariat to strengthen the implementation of obligations that already exist.

This distinction is one of the most important principles of OPCW decision-making.

One Recommendation May Rely on More Than One Article

Many recommendations are supported by several Convention Articles.

For example, consider the recommendation:

Review National Implementing Legislation

Convention Foundation:

- **Article I**
- **Article VII**

Article I establishes the activities that States Parties must prohibit.

Article VII requires each State Party to adopt national legislation to prohibit those activities.

Together, these Articles provide a complete legal basis for encouraging governments to review and strengthen their implementing legislation.

Another example is:

Strengthen National Preparedness and Protection

Convention Foundation:

- **Article X**
- **Article VII**

Article X encourages States Parties to strengthen protection against chemical weapons.

Article VII requires governments to establish the national measures needed to implement the Convention.

Together, these Articles support recommendations concerning emergency planning, training, and national preparedness.

Convention Articles Work Together

Delegates should avoid thinking of Convention Articles as isolated provisions.

Instead, they should think of them as building blocks.

For example:

Article I

establishes the prohibition.



Article VII

requires States Parties to implement that prohibition through national legislation.



Article VIII

defines the role of the OPCW in supporting implementation.



Articles X and XI

promote cooperation among States Parties.

Understanding these relationships helps delegates develop recommendations that are firmly grounded in the Convention.

Who Should Implement the Recommendation?

Before drafting an operative paragraph, ask yourself one simple question:

Who has the authority to carry out this recommendation?

The answer determines both the wording of the recommendation and the Convention Articles that support it.

Recommendations to States Parties

Recommendations directed to governments often rely on:

- Article I
- Article VI
- Article VII
- Article X
- Article XI

These recommendations encourage States Parties to strengthen implementation within their own countries.

Examples include:

- reviewing national legislation;
- strengthening National Authorities;
- improving export controls;
- increasing emergency preparedness;
- expanding international cooperation.

Recommendations to the Technical Secretariat

Recommendations directed to the Technical Secretariat often rely on:

- Article VIII
- Article X
- Article XI

These recommendations concern activities the Secretariat can carry out on behalf of the OPCW.

Examples include:

- providing technical assistance;
- developing guidance documents;
- organizing workshops;
- supporting implementation;
- facilitating cooperation among States Parties.

Delegates should avoid assigning responsibilities to the Technical Secretariat that fall outside the authority given to it by the Convention.

Before You Begin Drafting

Before writing either a preambular or operative paragraph, ask yourself these questions:

- ✓ Have I identified the relevant Convention Article or Articles?
- ✓ Does my recommendation strengthen an existing obligation rather than create a new one?
- ✓ Is the recommendation practical?
- ✓ Does it assign responsibilities to the correct body?
- ✓ Could States Parties realistically adopt it by consensus?

If you can answer yes to each question, you are ready to begin drafting.

An Example

Suppose delegates want to encourage governments to strengthen their national implementing legislation.

A common mistake would be to begin with an operative paragraph such as:

Encourages States Parties to strengthen national implementing legislation...

Instead, begin by identifying the Convention foundation.

Convention Foundation

- Article I
- Article VII

Next, explain why those Articles matter.

Possible Preambular Paragraph

Affirming Articles I and VII of the Chemical Weapons Convention, which require each State Party to prohibit activities prohibited under the Convention through appropriate legislative and administrative measures;

Finally, draft the operative paragraph.

Possible Operative Paragraph

Encourages States Parties to periodically review their national implementing legislation to ensure that it continues to provide an effective legal framework for implementing the Convention;

Following this process produces recommendations that are legally grounded, logically organized, and consistent with established OPCW practice.

Delegate Tip

Never begin drafting with the operative paragraphs.

Instead, identify the Convention Articles first.

Doing so will make your recommendation stronger and help you write preambular paragraphs that clearly explain why your proposal belongs in the draft decision.

Key Takeaways

- Every recommendation should be based on one or more Convention Articles.
- Identify the relevant Articles before writing preambular or operative paragraphs.
- Many recommendations rely on several Articles working together.
- Recommendations to States Parties and recommendations to the Technical Secretariat often rely on different Convention Articles.
- Most Conference decisions strengthen the implementation of existing obligations rather than create new treaty obligations.
- Following a consistent drafting process produces stronger and more persuasive Conference decisions.

Looking Ahead

The Convention was written to remain effective as science and technology continue to evolve.

The next section explains how States Parties can strengthen implementation of existing obligations while adapting the Convention to new scientific, technological, and security challenges without changing the Convention itself.



FROM CONVENTION TO CONFERENCE DECISION

Introduction

The Chemical Weapons Convention has remained effective for nearly three decades because it was written to address broad principles rather than specific technologies.

Science, industry, and security continue to change. New technologies create new opportunities, but they can also create new risks. The Convention allows States Parties to respond to these changes without rewriting the treaty itself.

This flexibility is one of the Convention's greatest strengths.

When the Conference of the States Parties adopts a decision, it does not usually create new treaty obligations. Instead, it helps States Parties apply existing obligations to current circumstances and improve the way those obligations are implemented.

As a result, most recommendations developed during an OPCW conference fall into one of two categories:

- strengthening the implementation of existing obligations; or
- adapting implementation to new challenges.

Understanding the difference between these two approaches will help you develop recommendations that are realistic, practical, and consistent with the Convention.

The Convention Was Designed to Last

The Convention was negotiated with the expectation that science and technology would continue to evolve.

Rather than trying to regulate every future scientific development, it establishes broad legal principles that remain relevant even as new technologies emerge. For example, Article I prohibits the development and use of chemical weapons regardless of how they are produced.

Whether a toxic chemical is created using traditional laboratory methods, automated synthesis, artificial intelligence, or technologies that have not yet been developed, the prohibition remains the same.

The technology may change.

The obligation does not.

This approach allows the Convention to remain effective without requiring frequent amendments.

Two Types of Recommendations

Most Conference decisions strengthen the Convention in one of two ways.

1. Strengthening the Implementation of Existing Obligations

Many recommendations encourage States Parties to carry out obligations that already exist under the Convention.

These recommendations do not create new legal requirements.

Instead, they improve implementation.

Examples include encouraging States Parties to:

- review national implementing legislation;
- strengthen National Authorities;
- improve export controls;
- strengthen chemical security;
- improve emergency preparedness;
- increase cooperation among government agencies.

These recommendations help States Parties meet commitments they have already accepted.

2. Adapting Implementation to New Challenges

The Convention has not fundamentally changed since 1997.

The world has.

Scientific advances, new manufacturing methods, digital technologies, and changing security threats all influence how States Parties implement the Convention.

Conference decisions help governments respond to these developments without changing the Convention itself.

Examples include recommendations to:

- strengthen oversight of emerging technologies;
- develop guidance on artificial intelligence and chemical security;
- improve education on responsible science;
- expand capacity-building;
- improve cooperation on emerging risks.

These recommendations apply existing Convention obligations to new circumstances.

Who Should Carry Out the Recommendation?

Once you know what you want to recommend, ask another important question:
Who has the responsibility to act?

Most recommendations are directed either to the States Parties or to the Technical Secretariat. Understanding the difference is essential when drafting operative paragraphs.

Recommendations to States Parties

States Parties are responsible for implementing the Convention within their own countries.

Conference decisions may encourage them to:

- strengthen export controls for scheduled chemicals;
- update national legislation;
- strengthen National Authorities;
- improve customs screening;
- increase information sharing;
- conduct regional emergency exercises;
- strengthen chemical security;
- improve outreach to industry;
- cooperate with international organizations;
- provide technical or financial assistance to other States Parties.

These recommendations focus on actions that governments can take through their own laws, institutions, and policies.

Recommendations to the Technical Secretariat

The Technical Secretariat supports States Parties by providing expertise, coordination, and technical assistance.

Conference decisions may request the Secretariat to:

- expand capacity-building programmes;
- develop guidance documents;
- organize regional workshops;
- strengthen training programmes;
- compile national best practices;
- facilitate voluntary information sharing;
- improve emergency preparedness exercises;
- report on implementation activities;
- develop training on emerging technologies;
- strengthen cooperation with other international organizations.

These recommendations should always remain within the responsibilities assigned to the Secretariat by the Convention.

A Practical Question

Before drafting any operative paragraph, ask yourself:

Am I strengthening implementation of an existing obligation, or helping States Parties apply that obligation to a new challenge?

If the answer is yes, your recommendation is likely to fit within established OPCW practice.

If the answer is no, consider whether your proposal would require an amendment to the Convention rather than a Conference decision.

This simple question can prevent delegates from drafting recommendations that fall outside the authority of the Conference.

Delegate Tip

Conference Decisions help States Parties implement the Convention more effectively or apply existing obligations to new circumstances.

When drafting a recommendation, begin by identifying the existing obligation you want to strengthen.

Key Takeaways

- The Convention establishes broad principles that remain relevant as science and technology evolve.
- Conference decisions normally strengthen implementation rather than create new treaty obligations.
- Most recommendations fall into one of two categories:
 - strengthening existing obligations; or
 - adapting implementation to new challenges.
- Recommendations should be directed to the body responsible for carrying them out.
- Understanding the authority of the Conference helps delegates draft realistic recommendations.