

Briefing to non-Residential Permanent Representations November 2014

1. On behalf of the Director-General, I would like to welcome you all to the briefing exclusively organised for the Permanent Representations of the States Parties which are non residential in The Hague.
2. The purpose of our briefing today is to keep our entire membership informed of the following:
 - ongoing issues in the OPCW,
 - the progress that we are making in the implementation of the objectives of the Convention,
 - the new concepts and projects being introduced,
 - and to provide an update on the preparations being made for the Nineteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties, which will be held in the first week of December.

We would be pleased to answer any questions that you may have and invite you to make this an interactive session.

3. Let me start with our activities in Syria:

Our efforts to eliminate the Syrian chemical weapons programme have made rapid progress:

- On 18 August, the MV Cape Ray completed the task of neutralising, at sea, 581 metric tonnes (MTs) of the sarin precursor DF and almost 20 MTs of sulfur mustard. This was an extraordinary effort, with all operations being carried out in a highly professional, safe, and environmentally sensitive manner.
- All effluents and waste resulting from these operations were transported to Finland and Germany for disposal at the Ekokem Riihimaki facility and GEKA, respectively. This process is now under way and is expected to be completed by March 2015.
- At this point, the vast majority of chemicals declared by the Syrian Arab Republic—some 98%—have been destroyed. This includes 100% of Category 1 chemicals and 89% of Category 2 chemicals.
- Efforts to clarify Syria's initial declaration are ongoing; the Technical Secretariat and representatives of the Syrian National Authority have had several meetings on this issue.
- With respect to the destruction of the remaining 12 chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) in the Syrian Arab Republic, three meetings took place in Beirut in August and September to determine modalities and time frames.
- The meetings involved representatives of the OPCW, the Syrian Arab Republic, the OPCW-UN Joint Mission, and companies identified by the

- Negotiations on a contract for procuring services, equipment, and explosives to support the destruction of the CWPFs, and to get destruction under way, have almost been completed.

4. OPCW-UN Joint Mission

As you are aware, with the removal of all chemicals from Syria the OPCW-UN Joint Mission came to an end on 30 September 2014. To ensure a seamless transition following the cessation of the Mission, the OPCW signed an agreement with UNOPS on the provision of safety, security, and logistical support for the OPCW's continuing operations in the Syrian Arab Republic.

5. Fact-Finding Mission (FFM)

- There had been several allegations about the use of chlorine gas against civilians in Syria. Through the work of the Fact-Finding Mission, established by the Director-General on 29 April, we are continuing to follow up allegations of chlorine gas attacks in Syria.
- Following a serious incident on 27 May, in which an improvised explosive device destroyed an armoured vehicle transporting members of the Fact Finding Mission, arrangements were made for witness testimonies to be collected in a safe location outside Syria.
- This has been done, and the second report of the Mission was issued on 10 September. Disturbingly, it concludes, with a high degree of confidence, that chlorine was in fact used as a weapon systematically and repeatedly in three villages in northern Syria.
- States Parties expressed their views on the report's key findings, as well as their support for the continuation of the FFM. The FFM continues to record data and collect information on allegations.

6. Chemical weapons destruction activities

- Possessor States continue to make significant progress in their chemical weapons destruction activities.
- As at 30 October, the overall amount of chemical weapons verified as destroyed amounted to 62,085.169 MTs, or 85.61% of declared chemical weapons.
- The Russian Federation had destroyed 33,225 MTs, or nearly 83.21%, of its total declared amount of Category 1 chemical weapons.
- The Secretariat had verified the destruction by the United States of America of 24,923.693 MTs, or nearly 90%, of its total declared amount of Category 1 chemical weapons.
- Libya completed destruction of Category 1 chemicals and informed the Secretariat that it was considering various options for handling remaining

- Iraq has submitted plans to clean up the remnants of unusable chemical weapons once the security situation improves in that country.
- China and Japan continue to work together regarding abandoned chemical weapons, and are making progress in accordance with their plan.
- The Secretariat also conducted inspections at two former CWPFs in the Russian Federation that have been converted for purposes not prohibited under the Convention. Four inspections have also been conducted at chemical weapons storage facilities—two in the Russian Federation and two in the United States of America.

7. Universality

- The Secretariat has expanded its contacts with Myanmar, whose authorities have recently indicated their commitment to ratifying the Convention at the earliest opportunity. We are working closely with Myanmar and we have provided assistance for capacity building and raising awareness about the benefits and obligations of joining the Convention. Myanmar has completed the process of acceding to the Biological Weapons Convention.
- The Secretariat has also enhanced its efforts to engage Angola. It is especially opportune for Angola to consider the next steps towards joining the Convention, given its accession to the United Nations Security Council as a non-permanent member next year.
- We are trying to reach out to States not Party through various ways and means, such as regional organisations, influential countries and groups, P5 countries, direct interaction involving them in capacity building activities, UN mechanisms, and international fora related to this subject.
- The Technical Secretariat invites all States Parties to redouble their efforts in this regard, given the current heightened international interest in chemical disarmament.

8. Programme and Budget for 2015

The Draft Programme and Budget has been forwarded by the Executive Council, with recommendations, to the Conference for approval. The P&B has been submitted at the level of EUR 69.6 million, which is 5% (4Mn) less than the P&B for 2014. This is mainly due to the removal of the cost of destruction activities in the Syrian Arab Republic.

The major highlights of the 2015 P&B are:

- The seven core objectives (chemical demilitarisation, non-proliferation, assistance and protection, international cooperation, universality, national implementation, and organisational effectiveness) will continue to guide the work of the Organisation.

- The principles of results-based management have been thoroughly embedded in the preparation and presentation of the P&B for 2015, in order to maximise the outcomes and their impact in a measurable way. This is done as an effort to transform the OPCW into a results-oriented and results-based organisation.
- The proposed staffing changes resulted in the number of fixed-term posts being reduced from 489 in 2014 to 481 in 2015. As required by the policy-making organs, the Secretariat will submit a mid- to long-term staffing plan by mid-2015.
- Some of the programme aspects that will receive added focus in 2015 are the enterprise-resource-planning (ERP) system; education and outreach; knowledge management; enhancing the Secretariat's capacity for contingency management, risk management and disaster recovery; augmentation of public diplomacy; and improvement of the information-management system.

9. ERP

- The OPCW adopted an ERP system in the late 1990s with *SmartStream* software to support its financial and procurement processes, as well as its human resources management processes. At that time, ERP was a relatively new concept and there were a limited number of players in the market offering an ERP solution.
- Over time, the OPCW's ERP system (*SmartStream* and its satellite applications) have become inefficient in the absence of expansion of the capabilities of its functionalities and integration with different modules.
- In this situation, as recommended by the External Auditor and the Advisory Body on Administrative and Financial Matters (ABAF), replacing the current setup with a modern ERP system would be a logical choice; additionally, this could also be looked at as an opportunity to streamline outdated and cumbersome administrative processes that have taken root in the Secretariat over the past 17 years.
- The ERP concept and strategy presented by the Technical Secretariat have been endorsed by the Executive Council.
- As a new ERP system requires substantial financial resources, the Executive Council adopted a decision on creating an ERP fund. Funding the new system will, in part, take place through savings that will arise from a reduction in the size of the Working Capital Fund and surpluses of 2012. In this regard, draft decisions are to be submitted to the Conference for its approval at its Nineteenth Session.
- Implementation of the project will require around three to four years and would require approximately EUR 7 to 9 million. We expect the new ERP to go live in 2018.
- As guided by the Executive Council, the Secretariat will be reporting to the Council periodically on the progress of the project and financial performance.

10. Retirement age

On 24 July 2014, the Executive Council at its Seventy-Sixth Session decided to raise the retirement age for all staff members from 62 to 65, with effect from the date of the decision. The General Assembly of the United Nations had taken a decision to raise the mandatory age of separation from 62 to 65 for new staff from 1 January 2014. However, the OPCW Executive Council decided to extend it to all staff members.

11. Medium-Term Plan (MTP)

The Technical Secretariat has issued a Medium-Term Plan (MTP) for the period from 2015 to 2019. As we are approaching a transition phase from chemical weapons demilitarisation to non-proliferation and increased focus on other objectives of the Convention, as agreed and discussed during the Third Review Conference and other meetings of the policy-making organs, the Technical Secretariat presented the MTP with several scenarios. However, as requested by States Parties and the ABAF, a single, clear direction is being prepared.

12. Rehiring of inspectors

The rehiring of former inspectors as fresh recruits has been discussed a few times at the sessions of the Executive Council. It will be further discussed at the forthcoming meeting of the Council on 19 November. The proposal of rehiring was sponsored by Bulgaria, Norway, South Africa, and Sweden. The purpose of the proposal is to retain expertise and knowledge, use their expertise as mentors and trainers for the new inspectors, save time in deployment, orientation etc, ensure business continuity, availability of a well trained Contingency Operation Team, the possibility of multi-tasking and gaining more and extended value for money invested in the inspectors during their first contract.

13. External Auditor

A new External Auditor is expected to be appointed by the Conference at its next session. The selection issue is before the Executive Council, which will make a recommendation during its meeting this week, on 19 November.

14. Public diplomacy

- 2013 and 2014 have been crucial and eventful years for the OPCW. Our involvement in Syria and the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize have put the Organisation in the international limelight. As a measure for maintaining the OPCW's high profile and responding to the ongoing high demand for public information, the Secretariat has revised its Public Diplomacy Strategy (S/1215/2014, dated 23 September 2014). The document is meant to guide the development and dissemination of public information over the coming years.
- The Secretariat is undertaking a series of projects aimed at improving the accessibility and user-friendliness of the public website in order to broaden our external readership and to provide Convention- and OPCW-relevant public information to online search engines and tools, such as Google and Wikipedia.

Education and outreach

- Another important recommendation coming from the Third Review Conference is education and outreach. We have prepared a strategy paper outlining how we should promote Convention-related education and outreach.
- The OPCW hosted an international conference on 22 and 23 September, entitled “Education for Peace: New Pathways for Securing Chemical Disarmament”. This event—the first of its kind organised by the OPCW—brought together some 120 experts from government, science, industry, academia, and civil society from more than 40 countries to exchange information on enhancing education and outreach activities and tools.
- The Director-General launched the OPCW’s online “Resources for Teachers and Students”, which include links to a variety of materials, including a film called “Fires” and six e-learning modules—now available in French and Spanish, in addition to English.
- The Secretariat will continue to expand and improve these tools as a key resource, including for assisting States Parties in enhancing national-level implementation. A notable recent addition has been the Legislative Assistance Support Tool, or LAST.
- We have conducted a pilot event under the strategy of education and outreach in Argentina to develop strategies for promotion of education and outreach on all issues towards reaching the object and purpose of the Convention. The outcome of this project will be shared with other regions to develop their own strategies.

15. OPCW Laboratory

- I would also like to inform you that we are improving our in-house training infrastructure. The Secretariat remains committed to imparting knowledge, to include the analysis of chemicals relevant to the Convention. To this end, we are building a multipurpose training laboratory within the Rijswijk laboratory facility for training and cross-training external participants, as well as our own staff.
- One of the draft recommendations of the Scientific Advisory Board’s temporary working group (TWG) on education and outreach is to make education and outreach a core activity for the OPCW, with a proposal for a possible mechanism to support this. We are studying all recommendations of the TWG.

16. OPCW-The Hague Award

- As you are aware, an annual award, namely, the “OPCW-The Hague Award” has been created with the Nobel Peace Prize money, supported by a generous financial contribution from the City of The Hague. The award is intended to honour and recognise individuals and non-profit, non-governmental organisations that have made an outstanding contribution towards advancing the goals of the Chemical Weapons Convention and achieving a world free of chemical weapons.

- The OPCW-The Hague Award Selection Committee has decided to honour Dr Robert Matthews of Australia and the Finnish Institute for Verification of the Chemical Weapons Convention (VERIFIN) as the joint recipients of the inaugural OPCW-The Hague Award.
- These awards will be presented during the forthcoming session of the Conference.

17. 2015 Ieper event

- Looking to next year, the Technical Secretariat recently briefed States Parties on preparations for a special OPCW meeting, to be held on 21 April 2015 in Ieper, Belgium, to commemorate the centennial of the first large-scale use of chemical weapons (S/1214/2014, dated 16 September 2014).
- The centenary anniversary of the first large-scale use of chemical weapons near Ieper in Belgium during World War One will mark an important event in the history of chemical warfare and disarmament—we will work closely with States Parties, other arms control and disarmament organisations, civil society and academia to use this anniversary to highlight the important ongoing work in preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons.
- The programme of the special OPCW event will include the screening of a short film/documentary, statements by dignitaries, commemorative readings, the issuing of a declaration, unveiling of a plaque, opening of an exhibition, and a last-post ceremony (victim-remembrance ceremony) at the Menin Gate. The delegates will also have the opportunity to visit the museum in Ieper. A draft text for a declaration will be circulated at a later stage for the consideration of Member States.
- In this regard, the Technical Secretariat will organise transport for the delegations (1+1) from Brussels to Ieper and back. Please avail yourselves of this facility. Please confirm your participation. My colleagues will contact your missions in due course for this purpose.

18. Exhibition

In response to expressions of interest from several States Parties, in the lead-up to the Ieper centennial the OPCW plans to display exhibits at OPCW Headquarters related to the impact of chemical weapons during World War One. States Parties have been advised of these arrangements in a *note verbale* and are invited to discuss their exhibit proposals with the Secretariat.

19. Partnership with industry and scientific community

- The Third Review Conference made several recommendations that the Technical Secretariat closely engage with chemical industry, scientific community, academia, civil society in order to enhance the implementing aspects of all objectives of the Convention, as well as to broaden the outreach of all stakeholders, both traditional and non-traditional.
- In this regard, a Note has been issued on engaging the chemical industry associations through an organised and interactive arrangement.

- Furthermore, it has also been proposed that representatives of industry associations and the scientific community should be invited to attend sessions of the Conference and that they be given a time slot to make a collective statement, which is expected to be approved by the Conference.

20. CSP-19

Finally, I would like to share a few words on the forthcoming session of the Conference. As you are aware, the session will take place from 1 to 5 December in The Hague, and I believe that all of you will attend the annual session to allow us to take stock of programmes and activities carried out by the Technical Secretariat in the last 12 months and provide further guidance for future activities.

In addition to regular agenda items, the Conference will deliberate on the progress achieved in the implementation of the Convention and on the ERP and related decisions, the Programme and Budget for 2015, attendance of industry and the scientific community at the plenary of Conference, the appointment of the External Auditor, etc. During the session, as I have already mentioned, the OPCW-The Hague Award will be presented. We look forward to meeting you in The Hague during the Conference session.

Around 60 NGOs have registered to participate in this session of the Conference.

We will also issue a new edition of the OPCW Legal Texts. You may be able to obtain copies of the publication during the session.

Furthermore, as a last point I would like to request you to consider arranging visits for your political leaders, VIPs and senior officials to the OPCW Technical Secretariat whenever they pay bilateral visits to Belgium or other countries in the neighbourhood. The Director-General is happy to receive them in person and brief them on the activities of the OPCW.

The Director of the International Cooperation and Assistance Division is here to brief you on the progress made on international cooperation and assistance activities. This concludes my briefing.