



ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Opening Remarks of the 2017 Associate Programme (Eighteenth Edition)

By Ambassador Hamid Ali Rao, Deputy Director-General

OPCW HQ, The Hague

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REMARKS AS DELIVERED

Distinguished participants,
Dear colleagues,

I warmly welcome you to the 18th edition of the OPCW Associate Programme and to The Hague.

The Associate Programme is a key component of our international cooperation and assistance support. It serves to enhance national capacities in Member States, and broadens the pool of experts and professionals available to National Authorities and the OPCW.

Since its launch eighteen years ago, the Programme has gained significant and growing interest among our Member States. More than 420 participants from nearly 120 nations have benefitted from the Programme, including representatives of chemical industry, academic institutions and government agencies.

This year, as we celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), we recognize that important progress has been made.

Today, the Convention is acknowledged as a robust disarmament treaty which has enabled the destruction of over 95% of the world's declared chemical weapons. Turning to tomorrow, we are focused on ensuring these gains are permanent.

To achieve this and deliver on our motto "Working together for a world free of chemical weapons", the OPCW relies on its Member States and experts like you.

Your participation in the Associate Programme is a unique and invaluable opportunity for you to contribute to the continuing success of the Convention and your country's contribution to global disarmament and non-proliferation.

This year's Programme has been designed to provide an integrated approach, combining both theoretical and practical training.

Participants will engage in stimulating and challenging activities, gaining the expertise and skills necessary to operate safely and effectively in modern chemical industrial settings.

Throughout the Programme, you will be trained by experts at OPCW Headquarters and have the

opportunity to work at world-class universities and industry facilities.

To ensure the latest developments in science, technology, and chemical industry are incorporated, a yearly needs-based assessment was conducted and is reflected in the curriculum.

You will also learn more about our alumni network; a vibrant professional platform for former participants to exchange views, best practices and scientific information.

Many alumni of the Programme have gone on to play a substantial role in the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

I am pleased to note that twenty former participants of the Programme have been employed at the OPCW Technical Secretariat.

Other graduates have been serving in their respective National Authorities in key positions.

At the end of the Programme, you will be given an opportunity to join the alumni network in order to share your own experiences and follow the initiatives undertaken by other Programme participants.

Upon your return home, we hope that you will serve as valuable advocates and ambassadors for the implementation of the Convention, as well as for the promotion of the peaceful uses of chemistry.

Our staff will meet with each of you to discuss your plans on transferring the knowledge and experience gained through this programme within your own institutions as well as in your home countries.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to thank all those that have made this year's Programme possible, including Permanent Representations, National Authorities and national chemical industry associations of Argentina, Brazil, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Poland, Spain, and Sri Lanka for contributing to this year's Programmes and indeed making it possible for us yet again to conduct this important event.

I also wish to express my appreciation to the University of Surrey, the World Customs Organization (WCO), the European Chemical Industry Council (CEFIC), the European Association of Chemical Distributors (FECC), the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA), the Dutch Customs Authorities, the City of Rotterdam, the Port of Rotterdam, and the Technical University of Delft, for their valuable contributions and support.

In closing, I invite all participants to actively participate in the Programme and engage on issues of interest, as well as share experiences, expertise and best practices in relation to the peaceful uses of chemistry. I further encourage you to build networks and connections and learn from each other's experiences, as much as you learn from our experts.

I have no doubt that your efforts during the next nine weeks will be fruitful and rewarding for your professional careers.

I wish you all an enjoyable and productive programme.

Thank you for your attention.