



Eighty-Ninth Session
9 – 12 October 2018

EC-89/DG.31
9 October 2018
Original: ENGLISH

OPENING STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AT ITS EIGHTY-NINTH SESSION

Madam Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

1. I welcome you to the Eighty-Ninth Session of the Executive Council.
2. At the outset, I would like to express my gratitude to H.E. Ambassador Jana Reinišová, Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic, who is leading the Council in an efficient and effective manner.
3. During the intersessional period, the Secretariat has released a revised proposal for the 2019 Programme and Budget. It reflects the projections of resources needed to implement the decision “Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use” (C-SS-4/DEC.3, dated 27 June 2018) adopted at the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties. In particular it addresses paragraph 10 of the decision, which instructs the Secretariat to put into place arrangements to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.
4. The Secretariat and I have been supporting the informal consultations of States Parties with further details and information on the proposal for the Programme and Budget. In this regard, I would like to thank our facilitator, Mr Hassan Zeran from the Permanent Representation of Chile, for his dedicated efforts. Mr Zeran will provide a briefing to the Council on the outcomes of this process during this session. I would also like to thank the States Parties that have provided feedback and comments to date, and I encourage all States Parties to do so.
5. In paragraphs 20 and 21, the decision also requests us to develop and present a variety of proposals to strengthen the implementation of the Convention. The Secretariat is developing these proposals. They will be presented to the Conference of the States Parties at its Twenty-Third Session in November, in accordance with decision C-SS-4/DEC.3.
6. As requested by the decision, the Secretariat has concluded the necessary arrangement with the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011 (IIIM). This investigation mechanism was established by the United Nations General



Assembly under resolution 71/248 (2016). Furthermore, the Secretariat has begun the process of implementing the arrangement with the IIM.

7. On 4 October, I was briefed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands about an action by the Netherlands Defence Intelligence and Security Service on 13 April to disrupt a cyber operation targeting the OPCW. I take this opportunity to thank the Government of the Netherlands for its diligent action to protect the integrity of the Organisation, in accordance with its obligations as Host Country. The Secretariat has found no evidence of information compromise as a result of the activities observed by the Dutch authorities.
8. As noted in the opening remarks at the Eighty-Eighth Session in July, the Secretariat has been aware of other attempts to gain unauthorised access to our IT systems using malicious software. A report is being prepared on these activities and will be shared with States Parties in due course. As a result, we have been taking measures to enhance our information security programme. Furthermore, a special capital investment fund has been proposed in the revised 2019 Programme and Budget to fund additional acquisitions of IT security tools and services.
9. On 7 August, the Secretariat received a note verbale from the Syrian Arab Republic. It provided comments on the “Interim Report of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria Regarding the Incident of Alleged Use of Toxic Chemicals as a Weapon in Douma, Syrian Arab Republic, on 7 April 2018” (S/1645/2018, dated 6 July 2018 and Corr.1, dated 10 July 2018). The FFM continues to collect and analyse information with regard to this incident and other credible alleged incidents. A final report on the alleged use of toxic chemicals as a weapon in Douma will be released in due course.
10. Turning now to the activities of the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), the Secretariat completed the analysis of the information provided in a note verbale dated 10 July 2018. This note verbale addressed questions raised as a result of the Secretariat’s analysis of documents submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic on 10 November 2017.
11. In response, a letter was sent to the Syrian Arab Republic on 28 September 2018 conveying the Secretariat’s assessment that the information did not substantially clarify the outstanding issues. It further invited the Syrian authorities to continue working on the clarification of all gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies noted in the initial declaration and further submissions.
12. A report on the work of the DAT (EC-89/HP/DG.2, dated 1 October 2018) has been released to States Parties.
13. Following an incident in the town of Amesbury on 30 June 2018 involving a toxic chemical, an OPCW team conducted a technical assistance visit to the United Kingdom at the request of that State Party. The Technical Secretariat issued a report transmitted to the United Kingdom and to all other States Parties (TAV/03/18, dated 4 September 2018). An unclassified executive summary of the report (S/1671/2018, dated 4 September 2018) was also released. On 13 September, the Secretariat briefed States Parties on the work of the technical assistance visit in a classified session.

14. On 16 July 2018, the State of Palestine submitted its initial declaration within 30 days of accession, as required by the Convention. Achieving full universality remains a priority for the OPCW and a report on our activities in this area (EC-89/DG.12 C-23/DG.9, dated 3 September 2018) was made available to States Parties prior to this session.
15. With regard to destruction, progress on the elimination of remaining declared Category 1 chemical weapons continues, and 96.5% of all of them had been destroyed as at 30 September 2018.
16. The United States of America, the only remaining possessor State Party, reiterated in its report to the Council (EC-89/NAT.4, dated 19 September 2018) that it remains on track to meet its planned completion date of 2023.
17. The United States of America has destroyed 25,266 metric tonnes (MT), which is equivalent to 91% of its declared Category 1 chemical weapons stockpile. This information is up to date as at 30 September.
18. The Secretariat has verified the destruction of all 27 chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) declared by the Syrian Arab Republic. Destruction of the final two CWPFs took place on 7 and 23 June respectively. On 12 July, the Secretariat conducted inspections at both sites and verified that all declared buildings had been demolished.
19. China and Japan have continued to make progress on excavations, recoveries, and destruction of abandoned chemical weapons (ACW) at various sites in China. As at 1 August 2018, 63,722 items of ACW had been recovered, of which, approximately, 51,000 units had been verified by the Secretariat as destroyed.
20. Mobile destruction facilities have completed their destruction operations in Nanjing, Wuhan, and Shijiazhuang. Work is ongoing in Harbin to set up a destruction facility by the end of 2018, with operations anticipated to begin in the first half of 2019.
21. At the Haerbaling site, a total of 12,519 ACW items have been destroyed. A further estimated 330,000 items are awaiting recovery and destruction. The Secretariat has conducted nine inspections in China this year.
22. During the intersessional period, one inspection was conducted at an old chemical weapons (OCW) site in Italy.
23. Sampling operations at the former chemical weapons storage site in Ruwagha, Libya, concluded on 5 April. The results of the analysis are contained in a report presented to the Council at this session (EC-89/S/3, dated 2 October 2018). Clean-up of the site in Ruwagha is under way.
24. The project will complete the destruction of the remaining Category 2 chemical material tanks. In addition, the degradation products of Category 1 chemicals previously destroyed on the territory of Libya will be stabilised. All subsequent waste will be processed by solar evaporation in an environmentally compliant manner.

25. I thank the governments of Canada, Cyprus, Finland, New Zealand, Spain, and Tunisia, as well as the European Union for their generous support of these activities in Libya.
26. We have made progress in our project to upgrade the OPCW Laboratory and Equipment Store to a Centre for Chemistry and Technology. The negotiations with the Municipality of Pijnacker-Nootdorp to procure a plot of land for the construction of the Centre for Chemistry and Technology are progressing in a positive manner. A briefing on this project will take place tomorrow.
27. Once again, I would like to ask all States Parties for their support of this project, which will create tangible benefits for the States Parties and the Secretariat. I thank Canada and the Republic of Korea for their generous voluntary contributions to support the project. Please be reminded of my request to all States Parties for voluntary contributions, regardless of the size, to the trust fund that was created for this project.
28. The implementation of the Convention requires us to ensure that the Secretariat is effectively staffed and managed. In this context, the Secretariat engaged two external consultants to conduct an analysis of the impact of the tenure policy on the OPCW. I have submitted a Note (EC-89/DG.28, dated 2 October 2018) that includes a report of their findings. Due consideration should be given to the recommendations of the report to ensure that the tenure policy meets the needs of the Organisation and the expectations of our States Parties.
29. I welcome the proceedings by the Open-Ended Working Group for the Preparation of the Fourth Review Conference (OEWG-RC). I am confident that, under the leadership of Ambassador I Gusti Agung Wesaka Puja of Indonesia, the group will lay a sound foundation for a productive Review Conference.
30. This month, the group will issue an update to its review of the operation of the Convention since the Third Review Conference (WGRC-4/S/1, dated 29 May 2018). I trust that this contribution will assist the preparations of delegations to the Conference, which will take place from 21 to 30 November.
31. On 5 October, a retreat of Ambassadors was organised by the Ambassadors of El Salvador, Indonesia, and the Netherlands and was hosted by the Government of the Netherlands. During the retreat, discussions took place on the preparation of the Fourth Review Conference and issues of common interest. The deliberations of this retreat will usefully feed our discussions.
32. The Advisory Board on Education and Outreach (ABEO) held its Sixth Session from 28 to 30 August 2018. I was pleased to learn that the Board's work on a brochure for States Parties to support their education and outreach activities is well under way. I look forward to seeing the finished product, which the Secretariat will make available in all the official languages of the Organisation.
33. Moving now to the subject of counter-terrorism, yesterday's session of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism (OEWG-T) focused on identifying best

practices from the CBRN¹ world in order to build capacity in this vital area. I look forward to the OEWG-T and its Sub-Working Group on Non-State Actors strengthening their roles as interactive forums for States Parties to exchange best practices and experiences. I thank Ambassador Ngofa of Nigeria and Ambassador Infante of Chile for their continuing leadership in this regard.

34. Enhancing links with other international organisations is critical to our work in this area. As such, we are seeking to formalise a working arrangement with the World Health Organization. The OPCW also continues to co-chair the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force Working Group on Preventing and Responding to WMD² Attacks.
35. In the area of international cooperation and assistance, the Secretariat delivered 28 courses, seminars, and workshops for 460 participants from all regions during the intersessional period. Those activities included seven events under the fourth phase of the OPCW Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa on the Chemical Weapons Convention (the Africa Programme). The Africa Programme continues to progress, as outlined in the report presented in September for the consideration of the Council (EC-89/DG.14 C-23/DG.10, dated 5 September 2018).
36. During the reporting period, the nineteenth internship programme for legal drafters and National Authority representatives was held from 6 to 10 August, with representatives from Chad and Guinea participating. The two States Parties successfully drafted legislation covering all initial measures and developed action plans detailing the next steps in the implementation process. Thirty-nine States Parties have now participated in the programme.
37. From 12 to 14 September, the Influential Visitors Programme was organised for Chile at the OPCW Headquarters to aid the process of adopting implementing legislation. The programme included briefings from the Secretariat and a visit to the OPCW Laboratory and Equipment Store. Upon the conclusion of the visit, the delegation, composed of members of Parliament, and the Ministry of National Defence of Chile, developed an action plan outlining the activities required for the swift adoption of the implementing bill.
38. I am pleased to announce that the OPCW launched a new website in September. The core elements of the website are currently undergoing translation into the Organisation's official languages. I would like to express my appreciation to everyone who has previewed the website and provided feedback.
39. On 23 September, the OPCW welcomed over 1,000 visitors for the annual edition of International Open Day, coordinated by the municipality of The Hague. The social media campaign for the International Open Day reached over 300,000 people from around the world through Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

¹ CBRN = chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear.

² WMD = weapon(s) of mass destruction.

Madam Chairperson,

40. My report to the Eighty-Ninth Session is detailed. The full text of my statement will be circulated to delegations as an official document of this session.

Verification of chemical demilitarisation

United States of America

41. In the United States of America, destruction operations are ongoing at the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (PCAPP) and the PCAPP Explosive Destruction System (PCAPP-EDS).
42. As at 31 August 2018, the PCAPP facility had destroyed 2,170.5 MT of mustard agent. The destruction operations of mustard agent-filled M104 and M110 155-mm projectiles and the reconfiguration of 4.2-inch mortars are ongoing. The energetic components removed from these reconfigured munitions have been regularly shipped to and destroyed at the PCAPP's non-contiguous Static Detonation Chamber (SDC), located in Anniston, Alabama.
43. The PCAPP-EDS facility continued the second campaign for the destruction of problematic munitions that have been identified either at the PCAPP or at the Pueblo CWSF. As at 31 August, 200 problematic munitions had been identified, 118 of which have been destroyed.
44. Construction and systemisation activities are moving forward at the Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (BGCAPP) and the BGCAPP-SDC. Construction at the BGCAPP has been completed and systemisation is currently at 65.4%. Construction work and systemisation for the BGCAPP-SDC now stand at 98.2% and 80% completion, respectively.

Declarations

45. Since the last Council session there have been no changes with regard to the submission of initial declarations, with only one State Party yet to submit under Articles III and VI of the Convention.
46. The timeliness of submissions of annual declarations on past activities (ADPA) has remained similar over the last five years. This year, 84% of the States Parties with declarable facilities and/or declarable activities had submitted their ADPA for 2017 on time.
47. The deadlines for the submission of annual declarations on anticipated activities (ADAA) for 2019 are 2 October 2018 for Schedule 1 facilities and 1 November 2018 for Schedule 2 and 3 plant sites. As at 18 September 2018, three States Parties had already submitted their 2019 ADAA regarding Schedule 1 facilities. I encourage States Parties to continue to provide timely and accurate declarations to the Secretariat.

Article VI inspections

48. As was the case in previous years, the number of Article VI inspections planned for this year is 241. Of these, 11 are planned at Schedule 1 facilities, 42 at Schedule 2 plant sites, 19 at Schedule 3 plant sites, and 169 at other chemical production facilities (OCPFs).
49. As at the end of September, 206 Article VI inspections had been carried out. This figure includes seven inspections at Schedule 1 facilities, 35 at Schedule 2 plant sites, 15 at Schedule 3 plant sites, and 149 at OCPF plant sites. This represents 85% of the 241 inspections provided for in the Programme and Budget for 2018; we are confident our programme will once again be fully implemented this year.
50. So far in 2018, seven Article VI inspections involving sampling and analysis have been completed at five Schedule 2 plant sites and at two OCPF plant sites.
51. The Industry Cluster met yesterday and addressed preparations for the forthcoming Fourth Review Conference. The discussions included efforts to resolve transfer discrepancies, inspection frequency and site selection parameters, biomediated processes, refinements in the conduct of Article VI inspections, and the International Council of Chemical Associations' position paper for the Fourth Review Conference.

Inspectorate training

52. During the reporting period, the Capacity-Building and Contingency-Planning Cell of the Inspectorate Division provided, coordinated, or participated in six individual training courses. The courses comprised 564 inspector/trainee days and 190 instructor days, and included a total of 94 participants. Some of the instructors were directly engaged in the Secretariat's regional or national capacity-building programmes for States Parties, such as the Associate Programme and the assistance and protection instructors' course.
53. From 9 to 20 July, four of the OPCW's toxic chemical training instructors from the Capacity-Building and Contingency-Planning Cell were deployed, with the support of the Government of Canada, as participants in Exercise Precise Response 2018. The training, which took place in Canada, provided an invaluable experience for the instructors to observe and participate in exercises related to chemical weapons detection, reconnaissance, and chemical sampling, followed by decontamination protocols.
54. From 12 to 19 September, nine instructors from the Capacity-Building and Contingency-Planning Cell provided training for the assistance and protection instructors' course. The course brings together international participants who have completed the basic and advanced assistance and protection courses, to enhance their capacity for facilitating their own training courses in the future with the aim of furthering the capability to respond to CBRN threats. The seven days of training, hosted at the OPCW Headquarters and other training locations in The Hague, was a joint effort between the Assistance and Protection Branch and Capacity-Building and Contingency-Planning Cell instructors and provided a mix of classroom and practical training focused on exercise development and implementation.

55. From 3 to 7 September, the Inspectorate conducted a level 1 non-destructive evaluation refresher course for chemical-weapons munitions specialists at the OPCW Equipment Store in Rijswijk. The training covered methods and hands-on operation of equipment from the current approved equipment list and was provided by level 2-qualified inspectors from the Inspectorate.
56. Throughout the period from July to September, the Inspectorate supplied instructors in support of the Associate Programme. In all, 12 inspectors were involved at various times during the programme, giving classroom lectures and conducting table-top exercises to provide the associates with exposure to the chemical industry and the conduct of inspections under the Convention. Inspectors also helped with visits to the OPCW Laboratory and Equipment Store, served as mentors for the research projects, and assisted in the preparation for and assessment of the chemical engineering and management skills segment and the industrial assignment segment of the programme.
57. On 15 August, a refresher training course was provided by communications specialists from the Operations and Administration Branch, to update inspectors on the basic means of communication used during OPCW missions, including hand-held radios and hand-held satellite telephony.
58. On 20 September, an in-house mandatory inspector refresher training course was held. The main topics included updates on OPCW media policy, health and safety priorities (including risk assessments), communications, confidentiality procedures, operational updates from Council decisions, verification issues, and re-familiarisation with detection equipment. These training sessions provide an opportunity for ensuring that inspectors are kept up to date with developments in between the more formal training sessions.

Rehiring of inspectors

59. The first group of former inspectors rehired in 2015 had completed their tenure by the beginning of September. The eight Professional-category staff members left the Organisation after successfully carrying out the tasks that they had been assigned. Recruitment processes were undertaken to select new Professional-category staff to replace them, in accordance with decision C-19/DEC.11 (dated 4 December 2014).
60. The Secretariat is committed to further developing its scientific and technical capabilities in the context of inspections. The Safety and Analytical Chemistry Cell (SACC) of the Inspectorate Division has developed a number of internal training courses related to the chemistry of chemical warfare agents, which are making inroads into knowledge transfer and retention within the Inspectorate and wider Secretariat. In the last few months, the SACC has been further developing the Schedule 1 chemistry training course, which is now a mandatory part of inspector training, and has provided awareness training on chemical warfare agents to staff at the Situation Centre.
61. SACC inspectors will also be involved in today's Science for Diplomats event, taking place in the Ooms Room at 13:00, where physical protection for inspectors in field environments will be discussed. It promises to be an interesting event.

Declaration Assessment Team

62. During the reporting period the Secretariat continued consultations regarding Syria's chemical weapons declaration through the exchange of letters. A report on the work of the DAT (EC-89/HP/DG.2) has been released to States Parties.

OPCW Laboratory

63. There are currently 22 laboratories in the designated laboratory network. Of these, 22 laboratories from 18 States Parties are designated for the analysis of environmental samples and 17 laboratories from 13 States Parties are designated for analysis of biomedical samples.
64. This network of laboratories remains critical to our mission. In 2018, as at 30 September, nine partner laboratories had analysed more than 150 samples in support of the OPCW's missions. With frequent sample analysis ongoing at the OPCW designated laboratories, this network remains of high importance. I wish to thank those laboratories that have recently worked on OPCW samples for their assistance. I take this opportunity to encourage all designated laboratories that have not yet done so to actively negotiate technical agreements with the Secretariat.

Specialised IT solutions for verification activities

65. The Secretariat is still modernising its specialist IT solutions for verification-related routine and non-routine activities.

Enterprise content management system

66. The first phase of the implementation of the enterprise content management (ECM) system, which aims to enhance the management of information and streamline business processes related to verification activities and other classified information, is nearing completion. This phase focuses on configuring and customising the system to provide initial document and records management, as well as workflow functionalities, along with additional functionalities required to support the management of information related to non-routine missions.

Verification analytics

67. Verification analytics aims to enhance the current verification reporting and data analysis capabilities with new analytical methods, to provide high quality, near real-time data and to establish a simplified, transparent reporting process for users. During the reporting period, the Secretariat procured a new data visualisation and reporting platform in order to replace the existing reporting tool. The new platform will be used to deliver dashboards and enhanced reports to visualise the data available in the data warehouse.

Electronic declaration tool for National Authorities

68. The next version of the electronic declaration tool for National Authorities (EDNA), the electronic declaration information system (EDIS), was launched in September. The EDIS will further strengthen the verification regime by bringing usability

enhancements and new functionalities to the declaration preparation and submission process. The first release of the system will include all of the existing EDNA features with the addition of a new user management module for distributed use of the system and Article III riot-control agent declarations. The EDIS is in its first month of development and the system will be available in 2019.

Cooperation with the World Customs Organization

69. The Secretariat continues to cooperate closely with the World Customs Organization (WCO), with a view to bolstering international efforts to control the chemical trade. In this framework, the WCO invited experts of the OPCW to participate in the WCO/Japan Regional Customs Laboratories Programme in Brussels in October to inform participants of the role of the OPCW in the monitoring and control of trade in scheduled chemicals.

Privileges and immunities

70. A bilateral agreement on privileges and immunities between Paraguay and the OPCW entered into force on 14 August. I take this opportunity to remind States Parties that have not yet concluded or ratified such agreements of the value of doing so at the earliest opportunity.

International cooperation and assistance

Implementation support

71. The Secretariat has issued its annual reports on the Status of Implementation of Article VII of the Chemical Weapons Convention (EC-89/DG.7 C-23/DG.6, EC-89/DG.8 C-23/DG.7, and EC-89/DG.9 C-23/DG.8, all dated 24 August 2018). The reports are based on the responses by States Parties to the Secretariat's note verbale sent on 28 February 2018, requesting updates on the status of implementation of Article VII. The Secretariat received replies from 130 States Parties, up from 118 in the previous reporting period. As at 31 July 2018, 155 States Parties had adopted national implementing legislation, of which 122 have legislation covering all initial measures and 33 have legislation covering some initial measures. During the reporting period, no States Parties reported the adoption of legislation covering all initial measures. Thirty-eight States Parties have yet to adopt any implementing legislation, down from 39.
72. From 20 to 24 September, representatives of the National Authority of Brazil visited Panama under the Mentorship and Partnership Programme. Through peer-to-peer cooperation, both States Parties increased their knowledge about practices and challenges in national implementation of the Convention. Options for steps to advance the implementation process were also discussed.
73. The Secretariat continues to offer training-of-trainers courses for representatives of customs training institutions on technical aspects of the transfers regime of the Convention. From 11 to 14 September, a course for francophone African States Parties took place in Algiers, Algeria, under the Africa Programme. More than 60 individuals from 11 States Parties participated in the event, which was opened by the Deputy Director-General. At the end of the course, the participants developed

action plans for integrating modules on the Convention into their national customs curricula.

74. On 26 and 27 September, representatives of 15 States Parties that had participated in previous training-of-trainers courses met in The Hague to share their experiences, give updates on progress, and report achievements in the introduction of modules on the Convention into their national curricula. Apart from serving as a peer-learning platform, the event provided the Secretariat with an opportunity to evaluate the outcomes of its training activities and identify good national practices for further dissemination.
75. From 10 to 14 September, a training course for representatives of National Authorities and relevant stakeholders of States Parties on fulfilling declarations and inspections obligations under Article VI of the Convention was organised in The Hague. A total of 36 individuals from 30 States Parties participated in the training. This year, the training was extended to stakeholders outside the National Authorities and included representatives of the chemical industry. Participants produced action plans at the end of the training, which will be assessed periodically by the Secretariat.
76. From 2 to 4 October, the Fifth Annual Meeting of Representatives of the Chemical Industry and National Authorities was held in Doha, Qatar. The event was funded by a voluntary contribution from Qatar. This was a unique event, facilitating the collaboration between the National Authorities and the chemical industry. Over 50 participants from 30 States Parties attended.
77. Also from 2 to 4 October, a subregional stakeholders' forum on implementation of the Convention and subregional cooperation in the Western Balkans was organised in Tirana, Albania. This pilot event involved discussing and exploring ways to strengthen subregional cooperation towards enhancing implementation of the Convention.
78. From 20 to 22 August, the Secretariat participated in a capacity-building workshop on strategic control enforcement, which was organised by the United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs and the 1540 Committee in Lusaka, Zambia. The event provided the opportunity to share information and exchange experiences in addressing the control of chemicals under the Convention.

International cooperation

79. From 16 to 20 July, in the area of integrated chemicals management, the Secretariat organised a course for States Parties in the GRULAC³ region on chemical safety and security management in laboratories, in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Seventeen individuals from 11 States Parties representing government agencies, the chemical industry, academia, and other relevant stakeholders participated in this course.
80. From 3 August to 5 October, the Secretariat organised the nineteenth edition of the Associate Programme. The course was held at OPCW Headquarters in The Hague, in Surrey in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and other

³

GRULAC = Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

- locations. Thirty-one individuals from 31 States Parties representing government agencies, the chemical industry, academia, and other relevant stakeholders participated in this programme.
81. From 24 to 27 September, the Secretariat organised the second edition of the Executive Programme on Integrated Chemical Management in London, the United Kingdom. Sixteen individuals from 15 States Parties representing government agencies, the chemical industry, academia, and other relevant stakeholders participated in this programme.
 82. From 9 to 11 October, the Secretariat is organising a seminar on chemical safety and security management for African States Parties, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, under the fourth phase of the Africa Programme. Fifteen individuals from the Africa region representing government agencies, the chemical industry, academia, and other relevant stakeholders are expected to participate in this seminar.
 83. From 24 to 28 September, the OPCW, the Government of Germany, and the University of Wuppertal jointly held two parallel training courses on loss prevention and safety promotion in the chemical process industries for States Parties from the Africa, Asia, and GRULAC regions. A total of 24 individuals from 24 countries successfully completed these courses, which were funded by a voluntary contribution from Germany.
 84. From 3 to 7 September, the Secretariat organised an analytical skills development course on micro-synthesis of organic compounds at the OPCW Laboratory under the fourth phase of the Africa Programme. Three participants from government chemical agencies of Algeria attended this course.
 85. From 10 to 21 September, the Secretariat organised two analytical skills development courses at VERIFIN (Finnish Institute for Verification of the Chemical Weapons Convention) in Helsinki, Finland. The first course was on the enhancement of laboratory skills in chemical weapons-related laboratory quality management and was attended by six individuals from government agencies, the chemical industry, and academia of six States Parties. The second course related to the enhancement of laboratory skills in quantitative mass spectrometry and also involved six individuals from government agencies, the chemical industry, and academia of six States Parties.
 86. Twelve participants were sponsored by the Secretariat under the Conference Support Programme to take part in two scientific events and conferences organised in areas related to chemistry and implementation of the Convention. Under the Fellowship Programme, six fellows from four countries were sponsored. The Secretariat also continued its support of 12 research projects that are funded by the OPCW.
 87. Under the Equipment-Exchange Programme, the Secretariat is in the process of identifying a beneficiary for an available fume hood.

Assistance and protection

88. In the area of Article X implementation, the Secretariat continued to carry out planned capacity-building activities aimed at fostering national and regional capacity to respond to incidents involving chemical warfare agents and toxic chemicals. In the

reporting period, more than 180 first responders and other stakeholders from all regional groups benefitted from these activities.

89. With regard to training activities, continuity was given to the basic course held in Turkey, with an advanced course held in China from 17 to 21 September. During the reporting period, two regional training cycles were completed. From 27 to 31 August, a first confirmatory exercise was held in Brazil, for the GRULAC region. From 24 to 28 September, a second exercise, targeting States Parties of the Asia region, was held in Malaysia.
90. In terms of specialised training, a second regional course for police first responders was held in Colombia for GRULAC countries. Additionally, from 1 to 5 October, an international course focusing on medical aspects of assistance and protection took place in the Islamic Republic of Iran.
91. From 15 to 17 August, a planning and coordination meeting was held in Khartoum, the Sudan, under the Africa Programme. This event initiated a multi-year project to build resilience against the potential use of chemicals as weapons for States Parties of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and to improve the response capacity in the subregion.
92. From 28 to 30 August, following up on the Secretariat's previous support to States Parties of the Caribbean Community, a meeting of national disaster coordinators was held in Barbados to support the development of national protection programmes and to assist with improved resilience to chemical incidents across the subregion.
93. To encourage further training at the national level and to promote the sustainability of OPCW capacity-building efforts under Article X, the Secretariat conducted three training-of-trainers events during the intersessional period. A tailored course for instructors from African States Parties was held from 13 to 24 August in South Africa. Similarly, from 3 to 7 September, a Spanish-language training-of-trainers course was held in Peru. Finally, from 12 to 19 September, the seventh annual OPCW training-of-trainers course was held at the OPCW Headquarters for a group of first responders from all regions.

Administrative and financial matters

94. The Secretariat has issued a revised and streamlined recruitment and selection administrative directive that includes a new selection procedure for top structure positions.
95. The Secretariat is implementing a number of initiatives to attract, retain, and develop female leaders at all levels of the Organisation. An amendment has been proposed to Staff Regulation 4.2, which I hope will receive the support of the Council and the Conference. Additionally, a female leadership development programme and a proposal for the election of Gender Focal Points throughout the Secretariat have been developed. The OPCW has also joined the International Gender Champions leadership network that brings together decision-makers to advance gender equality in international institutions and organisations.

Programme and Budget

96. The Draft Programme and Budget for 2019 is EUR 71.9 million and provides resources for the Secretariat to implement its operational and support programmes, including the increase in staff and financial resources to support the implementation of the decision adopted by the Conference at its Fourth Special Session (C-SS-4/DEC.3). The assessed annual contributions by States Parties amount to EUR 69.2 million.
97. A number of strategic financing ideas remain for the consideration of States Parties, including the use of biennial budgeting, the introduction of a major capital investment fund, ensuring that the Working Capital Fund is sufficient in terms of both level and strength, and consideration of zero-real-growth budgeting, given the steady erosion of the OPCW's regular budget in real terms.
98. As at 30 September 2018, the collection rate for the 2018 assessed annual contributions stood at 72.1%, which is lower than 84.7%, the level on the same date in 2017. In addition, there is still a shortfall of EUR 1.8 million in contributions to the previous year's budget, and a further EUR 0.5 million in Article IV and V verification costs remain unreimbursed.
99. The 2017 Financial Statements were audited and certified by the External Auditor of the OPCW and received unqualified opinions. This confirms that the Financial Statements are compliant with International Public Sector Accounting Standards and reveal no material weaknesses.
100. The 2017 Financial Statements have reported a cash surplus for 2016 of EUR 1.5 million. This surplus will be considered by the Council at this session.

Enterprise resource planning

101. Implementation of the enterprise resource planning (ERP) core solution is ongoing and the review of the solution design is nearing completion. A revised go-live plan is being finalised and will include data migration, user training, and user acceptance testing. The go-live of the core solution is planned for the end of 2018.

Information services

102. New initiatives are under way under the Secretariat's IT strategy. In addition to the ERP, these include the redevelopment of the Verification Information System, new telecommunications capabilities for field staff, significant improvements in the public website, and modernisation of existing systems for email, telephony, and document management.
103. The Secretariat is working to enhance the Extranet with new capabilities in declarations such as EDNA, the Secure Information Exchange, and the assistance and protection databank, as well as improved access to registration and course content for international cooperation and assistance events, using Eventus. A presentation for States Parties on these enhancements and future plans for the Extranet will be held on 11 October in the Ieper Room.

Office of Internal Oversight

104. The Office of Internal Oversight has revised its Charter to incorporate the recommendations of the External Auditor, the Advisory Body on Administrative and Financial Matters, and the Secretariat's Office of the Legal Adviser.
105. The revised edition substantially updates the previous Charter, issued in 2011. The new Charter is presented to the Council for further transmission to the Conference of the States Parties for its approval (EC-89/DG.26, dated 28 September 2018).

Science and technology

106. I take this opportunity to express my sincerest appreciation to the members of the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) whose terms end this year. These four members, who include Dr Christopher Timperley, the Board's Chairperson since 2015, were present for the entirety of the scientific review process between the Third and the Fourth Review Conferences. I thank them for their contributions and for the productive interaction and science diplomacy they have strengthened within the working culture of the SAB.
107. The Secretariat provided an overview of the schedules of chemicals at the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC) Green Chemistry Summer School in July, participated in a symposium and workshop on chemical forensics at the August meeting of the American Chemical Society, and provided a presentation during the Eighth IUPAC International Conference on Green Chemistry in September. The Secretariat, along with SAB members, discussed science and technology issues in trans-disciplinary settings that included scientists and policy-makers at the Biological Weapons Convention Meeting of Experts in August, and the Third Spiez Convergence Workshop in September.

External relations

108. Since the last session of the Council, we have welcomed nine new Permanent Representatives to the OPCW, who have presented their letters of credentials, from Australia, Kenya, Malta, Paraguay, the Republic of Moldova, Senegal, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland.
109. From 18 to 20 September, I visited Algeria and met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Abdelkader Messahel, and other senior Algerian officials. I visited the National Institute of Forensic Science and Criminology and the Museum of Armed Forces.
110. The eighteenth edition of the induction workshop for diplomatic personnel involved in the work of the OPCW was held on 24 September and welcomed eight Ambassadors and 81 delegates to the OPCW for a day of briefings and interactions with Secretariat staff. A visit to the OPCW Laboratory and Equipment Store was also offered.
111. The ninth edition of the T.M.C. Asser Institute's annual Summer Programme, organised in cooperation with the OPCW, took place from 1 to 5 October. Twenty-one early- to mid-career professionals benefitted from the programme,

increasing their knowledge of the diplomatic, legal, and technical aspects of disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The Director-General opened the programme with a presentation and a question and answer session for all the students.

112. Preparations for the Twenty-Third Session of the Conference of the States Parties and the Fourth Review Conference are under way. A record number of 89 civil society organisations represented by some 240 individuals have applied to attend and participate. The growing number of applications testifies to an increased and sustained interest in civil society participation in both the regular session of the Conference and the Review Conference.

--- 0 ---