



Opening Remarks by the OPCW Deputy Director-General at the Training Course on Fulfilling Declarations and Inspections Obligations under Article VI of the Chemical Weapons Convention

As delivered on 2 September 2019, The Hague, Netherlands

Distinguished participants,
Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, I welcome you to this Training Course on Fulfilling Declarations and Inspections Obligations under Article VI of the Chemical Weapons Convention. It gives me great pleasure to see as many as 41 participants from over 37 States Parties. In particular, I am delighted by the presence and participation of colleagues from the chemical industry.

Since last year, the Secretariat has made this course available not only to National Authorities but also to all stakeholders who have an interest in the implementation of the Convention. Given that the chemical industry is integral to the full and effective implementation of Article VI, its participation in this course is vitally important.

Dear participants,

With 193 States Parties to the Convention, 98% of the world's population lives under its protection. Furthermore, the OPCW has overseen the destruction of more than 97% of some 72,000 metric tonnes of chemical weapons. Despite these achievements, it should shock the conscience of the international community that chemical weapons are still being used. Against this backdrop, the importance of this course cannot be overstated. Fulfilling Article VI obligations has a direct and immediate bearing on how each State Party discharges its responsibility of ensuring that chemicals are used solely for peaceful purposes.

The work of the Secretariat to monitor relevant industrial activities is a significant undertaking. As of 22 August this year, a total of 92 States Parties had submitted declarations for declarable facilities or activities for 2018. This involves a total of over 5,300 sites. Since 2014, the Technical Secretariat has conducted 241 Article VI inspections every year. Added to this, the chemical industry is one of the fastest growing industrial sectors in the world, with production and trade in chemicals continually increasing in pace. A large number of chemical production facilities are producing an ever-wider range of new compounds. Today, approximately 4,800 industrial facilities are subjected to OPCW inspections. Since its establishment 22 years ago, the Secretariat has carried out over 3,900 inspections at industrial sites.

This course is designed to provide you with more than just an opportunity to acquire and refresh your knowledge and skills. It is also a chance to widen your perspective and to align your country's practices with the requirements of Article VI.

One of the special aspects of this year's course is that the declaration exercises are conducted with the OPCW's new digital tool, EDIS. We are delighted to be able to introduce you to this new system. At present, only 55 States Parties use the Electronic Declaration Tool for National Authorities, which is the predecessor of EDIS. I should also highlight that only 59 States Parties use the Secure Information Exchange system. We would therefore like to encourage all States Parties participating in this course to learn how to benefit from the innovative features of the available digital tools.

Dear participants,

We are all aware that each State Party is at a different level of development in the relevant industries and has different practices, challenges, and successes in the Article VI implementation. In this regard, this course will be a wonderful opportunity for all of you to interact with one another and the staff members of the Secretariat.

I would also like to take this moment to express my sincere appreciation for the continuous support provided by the National Authority of the Netherlands. Through their generous offer of an industrial site for the mock-inspection exercise, we have been able to offer you integrated and practical training that covers everything from declarations to inspections.

To conclude, I welcome you once again to the OPCW, and wish you a stimulating learning experience this week.

Thank you for your attention.
