



**OPENING STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL
TO THE NINETY-SECOND SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
(FULL VERSION)**

Mr Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

1. I warmly welcome all delegations to the Ninety-Second Session of the Executive Council.
2. At the outset, I would like to thank Ambassador Andrea Perugini for his continuing able leadership and guidance of the Council.
3. As per usual practice, the post-summer period has mainly been dedicated to the OPCW Programme and Budget. States Parties are in receipt of the draft with budgetary proposals to finance our activities in the year 2020. During the informal consultations, the Secretariat has provided further details and information to States Parties as and when requested. I would like to thank the co-facilitators, Mr Marcin Kawałowski from the Permanent Representation of Poland and Mr Daniel Baptista from the Permanent Representation of Portugal, for their dedicated efforts. A briefing will be provided to the Council during this session on the progress made in the budget process. States Parties have provided feedback and comments, and I wish to thank them for their constructive contributions.
4. The Secretariat has introduced a number of key strategic financing proposals for the consideration of States Parties. These proposals aim to bolster the Organisation's programmatic and financial strength and address the issue of future programme and budgets at zero real growth. Such an approach would appropriately reflect the responsibilities and difficulties placed on the Organisation due to year-over-year price increases and additional mandated activities. The introduction of a major capital investment fund will help plan for and fund long-term capital replacements that are becoming necessary and require attention. We also need to ensure that the Working Capital Fund remains strong to allow for liquidity, should receipt of assessed contributions lag. Finally, the transition to a biennial programme and budget cycle for the Organisation is put forward to States Parties as a means for longer term programmatic planning and organisational efficiency.
5. During the intersessional period, a visit was undertaken by a delegation of the Executive Council to the People's Republic of China, pursuant to decision



EC-67/DEC.6 (dated 15 February 2012). This visit was aimed at assessing the status of efforts to destroy chemical weapons abandoned by Japan on the territory of China. The visit included briefings and interactions with senior officials in China and a site tour of the Haerbaling Abandoned Chemical Weapons Destruction Facility, located in Jilin Province. The delegation was led by our Chairperson. In follow-up, a report by the Chairperson of the Executive Council, EC-92/3, was published on 8 October 2019. The Chairperson thanked China for the warm hospitality accorded to the delegation and expressed his appreciation for the cooperation between Japan and China in resolving this complex issue. I wish to add my voice to his commendation. I also wish to commend both China and Japan for their commitment to achieving the goals of the Convention.

6. The Conference of the States Parties at its Fourth Special Session adopted a decision entitled “Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use” (C-SS-4/DEC.3, dated 27 June 2018). In accordance with paragraph 24 of that decision, I have provided my latest report to the Executive Council (EC-92/DG.26, dated 27 September 2019 and Corr.1, dated 4 October 2019).
7. As was agreed after a request by States Parties during the July 2018 Executive Council regular session, the Secretariat has provided briefings to States Parties regarding the Syrian Arab Republic’s chemical file ahead of each regular session of the Council. The last briefing took place on 3 October, during which presentations were given on all activities related to the Syrian Arab Republic’s chemical file.
8. The Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) has been looking into a number of incidents, including two incidents in Khirbat Masasinah, on 7 July 2017 and 4 August 2017; one incident in Qalib Al-Thawr, Al-Salamiyah, on 9 August 2017; one incident in Yarmouk, Damascus, on 22 October 2017; one incident in Al-Balil, Souran, on 8 November 2017; one incident in Aleppo, on 24 November 2018; and one incident in Kabanah, on 19 May 2019. The FFM has been analysing the information collected regarding all aforementioned and other allegations of incidents still under assessment. The FFM is awaiting sample analysis results from the last deployments, is planning further deployments, and will report on the results in due course. A Note on the FFM activities has been issued (S/1798/2019, dated 3 October 2019).
9. With regard to the unauthorised disclosure of an internal document related to the investigations led by the FFM, the internal investigation that I have ordered is still ongoing, and is making progress. States Parties will be informed of its completion in due time.
10. The Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) continues to investigate several incidents, as identified in the Note by the Secretariat issued in June this year (Annex 2 of EC-91/S/3, dated 28 June 2019). In this regard, the IIT is actively collecting and examining information. The FFM has made all relevant data and information available to the IIT with regard to these incidents.
11. Additionally, letters have been sent to all States Parties, inviting them to share with the Secretariat information potentially relevant these incidents. I wish to thank those States Parties that have already provided information relevant to the work and mandate of the IIT. Contacts with international, regional, and local sources have also

been established for assistance that will facilitate the conduct of investigations and subsequent analysis.

12. To ensure that all aspects of its independent investigations adhere to objective standards and fully respect impartiality, the IIT has developed appropriate working methods. These methods are related to information management, evidence collection, documentation, and chain of custody. In developing them, confidentiality and security requirements for the storage and use of information provided by other entities were taken into account. An investigation and evidence management system will ensure the proper control, reliability, and authenticity of records. As the work of the IIT progresses, a back-up plan is being implemented in order to enhance security. A Note on the IIT activities has been issued by the Secretariat (EC-92/S/8, dated 3 October 2019).
13. The Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) has also continued its work to clarify gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies arising from the Syrian Arab Republic's initial declaration on its chemical weapons programme and subsequent submissions. On 22 August 2019, a technical meeting was held with a delegation from the Syrian Permanent Representation to the OPCW. The meeting related to the preparation and splitting of samples collected by the DAT during the twenty-first round of consultations. In follow-up, activities related to the off-site analysis of the samples took place at the OPCW Laboratory in the presence of the Syrian representatives. Subsequently, on 30 August 2019, the samples were shipped to OPCW designated laboratories for analysis.
14. On 26 September, I sent a letter to the Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic. I informed him of the Secretariat's intention to conduct the twenty-second round of consultations in Syria from 14 to 23 October. I hope that the Syrian Arab Republic will use this opportunity to provide the necessary information to help resolve outstanding issues. The Secretariat remains fully committed to ensuring the full implementation of all declaration requirements and to assisting the Syrian Arab Republic with fulfilling its obligations under the Convention. A report of the work of the DAT during the reporting period has been made available to the Council (EC-92/HP/DG.2, dated 27 September 2019).
15. Pursuant to EC-M-43/DEC.1 (dated 24 July 2014), regarding the destruction and verification of 12 declared chemical weapons production facilities, the Secretariat has been monitoring and maintaining the remote monitoring systems installed at four sealed underground structures on the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic. In line with the Council decision, the mandate related to those activities will come to an end by summer 2020.
16. Turning to destruction, as at 31 August 2019, the Secretariat had verified the destruction by possessor States Parties of 70,327 metric tonnes (MT), or 97.27%, of all declared chemical weapons.
17. As we near the goal of the total elimination of declared chemical weapons stockpiles, the OPCW will continue to intensify its focus on preventing their re-emergence. It is crucial to guarantee that the Organisation maintains the proper resources to fulfil its mandate on this field of activities, as this will remain one of its core responsibilities in

the future. We owe it to the victims of chemical weapons use and to future generations.

18. Yesterday, the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism was briefed by INTERPOL about the support it is providing to law enforcement agencies around the world to prevent and respond to chemical terrorism. I thank Ambassador Oji Nyimenuate Ngofa, Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the OPCW, for his valuable work as Chairperson of the Open-Ended Working Group. The Secretariat is looking at ways it can strengthen cooperation with INTERPOL. Such cooperation can generate beneficial synergies, given our own extensive experience with assisting States Parties in national implementation on the one hand, and assistance and protection regimes on the other. Both are critical to any effort designed to enhance the capabilities of law enforcement agencies in the context of prevention and response.
19. Upgrading the OPCW Laboratory and Equipment Store to become a Centre for Chemistry and Technology will also be critical to achieving our long-term goal of preventing re-emergence.
20. To date, contributions and pledges totalling EUR 28.5 million have been received from 21 States Parties and the European Union to support the ChemTech Centre project. I sincerely thank all contributors for their generous support. This EUR 33.5 million project is scheduled for completion in 2022. The year 2020 will be dedicated to the design, the completion of all necessary permits, and tendering processes.
21. An additional EUR 5.0 million will be necessary by July 2020 in order to complete the project on time. This project will generate tangible benefits for all States Parties. I renew my appeal to States Parties from all geographical regions to financially support this project with pledges that suit their respective situations. A briefing on the status of the project will take place tomorrow.
22. The ChemTech Centre will also enable the OPCW to keep pace with developments in science and technology. The Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) has played a long-standing and critical role in this regard. I take this opportunity to welcome seven new members to the SAB, while expressing my sincere appreciation to members whose terms end this year. Notable amongst the departing members is the Chairperson, Mr Cheng Tang. Mr Tang's calm and composed manner and the depth of his knowledge will be missed. I thank him for his important role at the head of the SAB. He leaves the Board in the capable hands of the incoming Chairperson, Dr Christophe Curty, and Vice-Chairperson, Dr Zrinka Kovarik.
23. Today, another session of "Science for Diplomats" will take place during the lunch break. As you know, these briefings offer knowledge on chemistry relevant to the Convention and support informed decision making. Today's session will cover the definition of a toxic chemical and its scientific basis. I encourage all delegations to attend these informative events.
24. Since the Ninety-First Session of the Executive Council, 23 training courses, seminars, and workshops supporting more than 460 experts have been delivered through the International Cooperation and Assistance programme.

25. I thank all States Parties that have been supporting and contributing to these activities. Your support and commitment remain crucial to ensuring their success.
26. The annual report on the status of implementation of Article XI of the Convention was issued during the reporting period. It provides a comprehensive overview of the progress and the evolution in our approach based on lessons learned. Key areas of focus include capacity-building activities, needs assessment, and the evaluation of the impact of the programmes implemented. The report also touches upon the challenges to be addressed in the future to further enhance the implementation of Article XI.
27. In the context of the OPCW Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa, commonly known as the “Africa Programme”, the fourth phase is due to be completed by the end of this year. An overview of the core activities and results achieved during this phase is provided in a Note submitted for the Council’s information (EC-92/DG.13 C-24/DG.11, dated 9 September 2019).
28. Consultations regarding the fifth phase of the Africa Programme covering the period from 2020 to 2022 are under way. I intend to meet with the African Group soon to benefit from the views of its members and discuss the way forward.
29. On Sunday, 22 September, the OPCW welcomed the public for another annual edition of The Hague International Open Day. Open Day is our largest single outreach event. A new record was set this year, when over 1,150 individuals visited the Headquarters. This represents a 15% increase over last year. Within the first 24 hours, the OPCW’s Open Day social media campaign reached over 150,000 people from around the world. Open Day continues to be an important opportunity to improve the public’s understanding of what we do and the importance of our mission.

Chemical demilitarisation and verification

Status of destruction of declared stockpiles

United States of America

30. The United States of America has two remaining chemical weapons destruction facilities: the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (PCAPP) in Colorado and the Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (BGCAPP) in Kentucky.
31. As at 31 August, the Secretariat had verified the destruction of 25,792 MT, or 92.88%, of Category 1 chemical weapons by the United States of America. Destruction of the remaining 7.12% is scheduled for completion by 2023.
32. The destruction operations at the PCAPP main plant are ongoing. Three Static Detonation Chambers (SDCs) will be built in 2020 in order to expedite the destruction operations at this facility. The foundations for the SDCs are being constructed and the first SDC unit has been shipped to the site.
33. Regarding the BGCAPP site, the SDC started destruction operations on 7 June. The Secretariat has deployed an inspection team at the site to verify the destruction operations. The construction of the main plant at the BGCAPP site is complete and systemisation is ongoing. The Secretariat conducted the final engineering review at

the main plant in July and the destruction operations at the main plant are expected to begin this autumn.

Libya

34. The clean-up of the former chemical weapons site in Ruwagha, Libya, is nearing completion. The Secretariat, in collaboration with the Libyan National Authority, is overseeing a project to rinse and treat the Category 2 chemical material and storage tanks and to treat 350 MT of highly acidic effluent from the 2013 neutralisation of HD. The project is anticipated to be complete in December 2019 with the sealing of the evaporation lagoons. I thank Cyprus, Finland, New Zealand, Spain, and the European Union for their generous support of this project.

Abandoned chemical weapons

35. China and Japan have continued to make progress on the excavation, recovery, and destruction of abandoned chemical weapons (ACWs) at various sites in China. As at 31 August 2019, 74,729 items of ACWs had been recovered, of which 55,875 ACWs have been verified by the Secretariat as having been destroyed.
36. At the Haerbaling site, the Secretariat carried out follow-up inspections of destruction operations and verified the destruction of 15,932 ACW items. A further estimated 330,000 ACW items are awaiting recovery and destruction.

Old chemical weapons

37. During the intersessional period, two inspections were conducted at old chemical weapons (OCW) sites in Italy and the Netherlands. Whilst destruction operations of OCWs have made considerable progress, recoveries continue to be made.

Declarations

38. Since the last Council session there have been no changes with regard to the submission of initial declarations, with only one State Party, Tonga, yet to submit under Articles III and VI of the Convention.
39. The timeliness of submissions of annual declarations on past activities (ADPA) has improved significantly. This year, 91% of the States Parties with declarable facilities and/or declarable activities submitted their ADPA for 2018 on time.
40. The deadlines for the submission of annual declarations on anticipated activities (ADAA) for 2020 are 2 October 2019 for Schedule 1 facilities and 1 November 2019 for Schedule 2 and 3 plant sites. As at 7 October 2019, 22 States Parties had already submitted their 2020 ADAA regarding Schedule 1 facilities and one State Party regarding Schedule 2 and 3 plant sites. I encourage States Parties to continue to provide timely and accurate declarations to the Secretariat.
41. With regard to amendments or correspondence received by the Secretariat during the intersessional period on Article III declarations, a presentation will be provided to distinguished delegates during this session under the usual agenda item.

Article VI inspections

42. The Secretariat continues to explore ways to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of Article VI inspections. One effective way to optimise these inspections is through the conduct of inter- and intra-country sequential inspections. Sequential inspections reduce the number of missions received by those States Parties that accept them, resulting in cost savings. Up to this point, of the 201 Article VI inspections carried out this year, 106 inspections have been conducted in 52 missions across 27 States Parties.
43. In 2019, the Secretariat has broadened the types of sequential missions conducted. Historically, sequential inspections have been formed through the pairing of two sites from the pool of selected sites. This year, the Secretariat has twice conducted an inter-country sequential mission in two States Parties. Additionally, the Secretariat has carried out two intra-country inspections of a Schedule 2 facility and an other chemical production facility.
44. I would like to thank those States Parties that agree to receive inter- and intra-country sequential inspections and I encourage all States Parties that have declared Article VI facilities to accept both combinations.

Inspector training

45. During the reporting period, the Capacity-Building and Contingency-Planning Cell of the Inspectorate Division provided, coordinated, or participated in 11 training courses. The courses comprised 690 inspector/trainee days and 169 instructor days, and included a total of 123 participants.
46. From 19 to 23 August and from 23 to 26 September, a cross-divisional operational planning course was held at OPCW Headquarters to improve the Secretariat's preparedness for possible non-routine missions.
47. From 4 to 6 September, the new inspection team leader course was organised for newly promoted inspection team leaders.
48. From 8 to 21 September, health and safety specialists participated in the offshore medics course, conducted at a university hospital in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
49. From 14 to 20 September, Germany hosted a hostile environment awareness training course that is compulsory for Secretariat personnel who are deploying to high security risk areas.
50. On 16 September, 14 new inspectors (Group R) started the mandatory initial training programme.
51. From 22 to 28 September, two medics from the Inspectorate attended a tactical combat casualty course in the Czech Republic. In addition, three medics will be undergoing this training later this year.

52. From 23 to 27 September, chemical weapons munitions specialist instructors held non-destructive evaluation (NDE) practical training in the OPCW Equipment Store. This course continued from 29 September to 5 October 2019 in Poelkapelle, Belgium. Inspectors refreshed and improved their NDE operations knowledge and skills while working with live chemical munitions.
53. From 30 September to 3 October, the United States of America provided two course sessions on hazardous waste operations and emergency response, which are mandatory under United States regulations for individuals working in United States chemical weapons destruction facilities.
54. Also from 30 September to 3 October, a diplomatic interactions training course was held at OPCW Headquarters for senior OPCW staff.
55. I would like to thank Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America for the technical and in-kind support provided for these training modules.

Specialised information-technology solutions for verification activities

56. In August, the Secretariat conducted, with the agreement of the inspected State Party, two pilot tests on the use of an advanced electronic signature solution. During a routine inspection, a preliminary findings report was electronically signed by representatives of both the inspected State Party and the inspection team. Following positive feedback, the Secretariat now intends to pursue a proof-of-concept for potential wider implementation of the solution and its integration within the enterprise content management (ECM) system. The ECM system is being developed to improve the management of information and streamline business processes related to verification and other OPCW activities involving classified information.

New Electronic Declarations Information System

57. In October 2019, the beta version of the Electronic Declarations Information System (EDIS) was released. This system is the new generation of the former electronic declarations tool for National Authorities (EDNA), which will no longer be enhanced or supported. EDIS includes all of the features available in EDNA, with additional improvements and new features that will improve the preparation of declarations. I encourage States Parties to express their interest in testing this version of EDIS by contacting the Declarations Branch.

International cooperation and assistance

Implementation support

58. During the intersessional period, the Secretariat issued the annual reports on the status of implementation of Article VII of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The reports are based on responses to the Secretariat's note verbale sent on 28 February 2019, requesting updates on States Parties' status of implementation of Article VII. The Secretariat received responses from 126 States Parties. As at 31 July 2019, 160 States Parties had adopted national implementing legislation, of which 119 have legislation covering all initial measures and 41 have legislation covering some initial measures.

Thirty-three States Parties have yet to report on the adoption of legislation, down from 38.

59. For States Parties that possess industrial facilities declarable under the Convention, 109 States Parties have adopted additional measures pertaining to declarable industrial facilities. As required under paragraph 5 of Article VII of the Convention, 165 States Parties have submitted information to the Secretariat on the legislative and administrative measures they adopted to implement various aspects of the Convention. Of these, 148 States Parties have provided copies of the texts of adopted measures.
60. Two regional training-of-trainers customs courses took place in the Asia and GRULAC¹ regions, respectively. The course in Asia was attended by delegations from 14 States Parties and was held from 16 to 19 July in Vientiane, Laos and the course in the GRULAC region was attended by 10 States Parties and was held from 17 to 20 September in Montevideo, Uruguay. The courses raised the awareness of participants on the transfers regime under the Convention and the tools needed to identify toxic chemicals. The courses also facilitated stronger partnerships between National Authorities and customs authorities. A key output of the courses is the development of an action plan by each participating State Party to incorporate modules on the Convention in their national customs training curriculum. The Secretariat delivered both events with the close cooperation and support of the World Customs Organization (WCO). The engagement of the WCO in both events is indicative of the effective implementation of the memorandum of understanding signed by the two organisations.
61. A pilot technical workshop on best practices in the development of a chemical security legislative and regulatory framework was held on 24 and 25 July at OPCW Headquarters. At this event, participants were informed about existing international and national legal and regulatory frameworks on chemical security. The workshop was attended by more than 20 participants from 12 States Parties and representatives from international organisations and industry associations.
62. The 22nd session of the internship programme for legal drafters and National Authority representatives was held from 26 to 30 August at OPCW Headquarters and was attended by six participants from three States Parties from the Pacific Islands: Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Tuvalu. During the programme, participants drafted implementing legislation that complies with the provisions of the Convention. As part of a results-based approach, the participants also prepared action plans and indicative road maps to support the national adoption process.
63. A training course on fulfilling declaration and inspection obligations under Article VI of the Chemical Weapons Convention for National Authorities and other stakeholders was held in The Hague from 2 to 6 September. The course was attended by a total of 37 participants from 35 States Parties, representing all regions.

¹

GRULAC = Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

64. The subregional stakeholders' forum on advancing national implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention was held from 17 to 19 September in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The programme provided an opportunity for participants to exchange views, experiences, and practices in respect of national implementation of the Convention, to identify gaps in implementation, and to develop recommendations to address them. The forum was attended by 26 participants from six States Parties, namely, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, and Peru, as well as international and regional organisations.

Assistance and protection

65. An annual report on the status of implementation of Article X of the Convention was issued during the reporting period. It provides States Parties with a full overview of the Secretariat's endeavours in the field of assistance and protection.
66. In the context of the International Support Network for Victims of Chemical Weapons, I again encourage new contributions from States Parties to the Trust Fund for Victims. This will enable the OPCW to maintain the momentum achieved thus far by implementing new activities in support of victims of chemical weapons.
67. A national training course on chemical incident preparedness for hospitals within the HOSPREP project was held in Dhaka, Bangladesh from 22 to 24 July. The training was hosted at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital and Combined Military Hospital (Dhaka) with an expert contribution from the World Health Organization country office in Bangladesh. The Secretariat's participation was funded from a voluntary contribution provided by the Government of Germany, with all national costs borne by Bangladesh.
68. A regional training course on sampling and analysis in contaminated environments for States Parties in the GRULAC region was held in Bogota, Colombia, from 12 to 16 August. This course was organised for the first time in close cooperation with the National Police of Colombia and the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory of the United States of America, through the Instructor Development and Exchange Programme.
69. A subregional training course on chemical emergency response in West Africa took place in Accra, Ghana, from 12 to 16 August. The course was jointly organised by the Secretariat and the Government of Ghana and targeted Member States of the Economic Community of West African States. The training was technically supported by instructors and equipment from the Swiss Armed Forces and was funded through a combination of regular budget and the support of the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
70. A national workshop on protective programmes against chemical weapons was held in Windhoek, Namibia, from 13 to 16 August. This workshop, which was conducted at the request of the Government of Namibia pursuant to paragraph 5 of Article X, provided expert advice on the development of Namibia's protective capacity against chemical weapons, as well as guidance on its reporting under paragraph 4 of Article X.

71. A planning and coordination meeting for the Pacific Islands Forum Member States was conducted in Nadi, Fiji, from 26 to 28 August. This was the first engagement of its type for the Secretariat in the Pacific Islands subregion and was aimed at setting the stage for future capacity-building efforts at the regional and national levels. The meeting focused on the necessity of national chemical risk assessments and response capability audits as initial steps, as well as on the development of a regional concept of operations to enhance chemical safety and security. The meeting was funded from a voluntary contribution provided by the Government of Germany.
72. A regional pilot workshop on national protective programmes against chemical weapons for States Parties in the GRULAC region was held in Lima, Peru, from 9 to 13 September. During the workshop, participants learned how to identify and assess chemical risks and gained the requisite tools and knowledge to assist local authorities in developing national protection programmes. Participants also analysed security challenges and shared current regional best practices and recommendations. The workshop was funded from a voluntary contribution provided by the Government of Germany.
73. A regional advanced assistance and protection course was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from 23 to 27 September. This course was organised in cooperation with the Malaysian National Authority and the Fire and Rescue Department of Malaysia. The course was the second stage of a regional training cycle that started in Seoul, Republic of Korea, in May 2019 and will conclude in Singapore in December 2019.
74. The fourth edition of the operational training course on chemical emergency response, planning and management for Member States of the East African Community was held in conjunction with the Ugandan National Authority from 30 September to 10 October at the Uganda Rapid Deployment Capability Centre in the city of Jinja. This training was delivered by trained instructors from the region under the supervision of instructors from the Population Protection Institute of the Czech Republic. The training was funded from a contribution by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

International cooperation

75. The Secretariat organised a course for analytical chemists from laboratories supporting customs services in Rijswijk, the Netherlands, from 8 to 12 July. Ten participants from 10 States Parties participated.
76. From 15 to 18 July, the Secretariat organised a seminar on the Chemical Weapons Convention and chemical safety and security management for States Parties in the GRULAC region in San José, Costa Rica. The course was designed for experts from National Authorities and relevant stakeholders dealing with chemical safety and security management and the Responsible Care® programme. It was attended by 31 participants from 16 States Parties.
77. From 26 July to 27 September, the Secretariat organised the 20th edition of the Associate Programme. Thirty-two participants from 32 States Parties representing government agencies, the chemical industry, academia, and relevant stakeholders participated in this programme.

78. From 3 to 6 September, the Secretariat organised the third edition of the “Executive Programme on Integrated Chemicals Management”. The event was held in Bangkok, Thailand. Thirty-three experts from 20 States Parties representing government agencies, the chemical industry, academia, and relevant stakeholders participated in this programme.
79. From 9 to 13 September, the third edition of the workshop on policy and diplomacy for scientists, entitled “Introduction to Responsible Research Practices in Chemical and Biochemical Sciences”, was held in Trieste, Italy, in cooperation with The World Academy of Sciences and the InterAcademy Partnership. Eighteen participants from 17 States Parties learned about the Chemical Weapons Convention, the role of diplomacy in science, and the role of science in contributing to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.
80. From 9 to 20 September, the Secretariat organised two courses on the enhancement of laboratory skills at the Finnish Institute for Verification of the Chemical Weapons Convention (VERIFIN) in Helsinki, Finland. The first course was on the enhancement of laboratory skills in chemical weapons-related nuclear magnetic resonance and was attended by four participants from four States Parties. The second course related to the enhancement of laboratory skills in quantitative mass spectrometry and involved six participants from six States Parties.
81. The Government of Germany, the OPCW, and the University of Wuppertal jointly organised two parallel advanced training courses on loss prevention and safety promotion in the chemical process industries for Member States in the Africa, Asia, and GRULAC regions, from 23 to 27 September. A total of 24 participants from 24 countries successfully completed these courses, which were funded from a voluntary contribution by the Government of Germany.
82. From 30 September to 2 October, the Secretariat organised a training seminar on the Chemical Weapons Convention and ports and maritime chemical safety and security management in Doha, Qatar. The seminar, which was designed for experts from ports and customs authorities dealing with chemical safety and security management, was attended by 15 participants from 11 States Parties and funded by the Government of Qatar.
83. Nineteen participants were sponsored by the Secretariat under the Conference Support Programme to attend events in four States Parties. Under the Fellowship Programme, three fellowships (a fellow from Cameroon in France, Panama in Finland, and Uganda in South Africa) were completed. A further three fellowships are currently ongoing (a fellow from Argentina in Italy, Kenya in Switzerland, and Nigeria in South Africa). The Secretariat also continued to support 19 research projects on topics relevant to the Convention.

Administration and finance

84. The proposed Budget for 2020 is EUR 70.958 million, which will allow the Secretariat to effectively implement its operational and support programmes.
85. As at 30 September 2019, the collection rate for the 2019 assessed annual contributions stood at 76.8%, which is higher than 72.1%, the level on the same date

in 2018. In addition, there is still a shortfall of EUR 1.1 million in contributions to the previous year's budget, and a further EUR 6.1 million in Article IV and V verification costs remain unreimbursed.

86. The 2018 Financial Statements were audited and certified by the External Auditor of the OPCW and received an unqualified opinion. This confirms that the Financial Statements are compliant with International Public Sector Accounting Standards and reveal no material weaknesses.
87. The 2018 Financial Statements have reported a cash surplus for 2017 of EUR 2.5 million. This surplus will be considered by the Council at this session.

Human capital management

88. In order to further strengthen the leadership capacity of Secretariat staff, additional emphasis is being given to developing leadership competencies. The introduction of a new performance management approach, which will focus on continuous feedback, coaching, and staff development, will be one of the main pillars. In this framework, the Secretariat will provide training and support to all line managers.
89. The Secretariat launched a pilot induction day for new managers during the reporting period. The new induction programme provides managers with vital skills, training, and development opportunities in the early days of their new role.
90. The Secretariat is introducing a web-based staff engagement tracking platform to help better leverage the powerful connection between staff engagement and performance throughout the staff employment cycle. Emphasis is on manager excellence and team performance. It guides managers on the follow-up process to surveys, enhancing ownership and accountability, and offers benchmarking against public sector indicators.

Knowledge management

91. The Knowledge Management Section has been created under the supervision of a Senior Knowledge Management Officer to preserve organisational knowledge and institutional memory. Synergies have been established throughout the Secretariat, stimulating work in the area of core expertise and knowledge identification, sharing, and preservation, with contributions from a cross-divisional team of "Knowledge Champions".

Education and outreach

92. The Advisory Board on Education and Outreach held its Eighth Session from 20 to 22 August. I was pleased to learn about the Board's work on key thematic areas, including active learning, e-learning, and a review of the educational resources page on the OCPW website. I welcome the Board's more structured approach to making concrete tools and educational materials available to the Secretariat and States Parties. Since its Eighth Session, I have issued the annual review of the Board's activities (EC-92/DG.23 C-24/DG.16, dated 24 September 2019) for the Council to consider and note.

Science and technology

93. The report of the Twenty-Eighth Session of the SAB (SAB-28/1, dated 14 June 2019) and my response (EC-92/DG.12, dated 9 September 2019) have been issued. I am pleased with the Board's efforts to strengthen scientific literacy amongst decision-makers. The Secretariat is now considering how to most efficiently address the suggestions to ensure that delegations have access to useful scientific reference materials.
94. I am pleased to have appointed seven new members to the SAB: Dr Elma Biscotti of Argentina, Professor Fengxia Sun of China, Dr Anne Bossée of France, Professor Imee Su Martinez of the Philippines, Dr Victor Kholstov of the Russian Federation, Dr Nomandia Magnificent Vela of South Africa, and Dr Norman Govan of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, all of whom will begin their term on 1 January 2020.

External relations

95. Since the last session of the Council, we have welcomed eight new Permanent Representatives to the OPCW, who have presented their credentials, from Angola, Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Mexico, and Sri Lanka.
96. The 19th edition of the induction workshop for diplomatic personnel involved in the work of the OPCW was held on 12 and 13 September. This year, we welcomed seven Ambassadors and 68 delegates to the OPCW for a day of briefings from senior managers. Two visits to the OPCW Laboratory and Equipment Store were also offered.
97. The 10th edition of the T.M.C. Asser Institute's training programme on disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction took place from 30 September to 4 October. Thirty-five early and mid-career professionals from 19 States Parties attended, increasing their knowledge about the diplomatic, legal, and technical aspects of disarmament and non-proliferation of chemical weapons. For the first time, and with the financial support of the European Union, the OPCW sponsored four representatives from civil society from Germany, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jordan, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
98. During the intersessional period, I met with a number of dignitaries at the OPCW Headquarters, including H.E. the Right Honourable Julie Payette, Governor General of Canada; H.E. Ms Martha Delgado Peralta, Undersecretary for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights of the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Mr Christian Leffler, Deputy Secretary-General for Economic and Global Issues at the European External Action Service; Mr Eamon Gilmore, European Union Special Representative for Human Rights; and Ms Bettina Tucci Bartsiotas, Director of the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Institute. This week, I will host H.E. Mr Nikos Christodoulides, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cyprus.
99. In September, I joined the Executive Council visit to China to observe the operations to destroy chemical weapons abandoned by Japan on the territory of China. I held bilateral meetings with H.E. Mr Le Yucheng, the Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Mr Fu Cong, the Director-General of the Department of Arms Control and

Disarmament at the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I also visited an OPCW designated laboratory located at the Academy of Military Medical Sciences, with which a technical agreement was signed. During my visit to Sweden in the same month, I delivered a keynote address at the 13th CBRNe² Protection Symposium held in Malmö, Sweden, and met with H.E. Mr Jens Mattson, Director-General of the Swedish Defence Research Agency and Mr Carl Magnus Eriksson, Deputy Head of the Department for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

100. In September, the Deputy Director-General visited Peru, where she opened a regional pilot workshop on national protective programmes, and held bilateral meetings with H.E. Mr Manuel Talavera Espinar, Peru's Secretary-General of the Vice-Ministerial Office of Foreign Affairs; Mr Agustín De Madalengoitia Gutiérrez, Director of Security and Defence at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; H.E. Mr Oscar Graham Yamahuchi, Vice Minister for Industry at the Ministry of Production; and Mr Ricardo Márquez Flores, President of the National Association of Industries.
101. Preparations for the Twenty-Fourth Session of the Conference of the States Parties are currently under way. A record number of 93 civil society organisations represented by some 279 individuals have applied to attend and participate. Eighty-six non-governmental organisations have so far been approved by the General Committee for participation. These application numbers testify to a growing and sustained interest from civil society in participation in the sessions of the Conference of the States Parties.

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CBRNe = chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive.