



Closing Remarks by the OPCW Deputy Director-General at the 22nd Annual Meeting of National Authorities

As delivered on 25 November 2020, online

It is my pleasure and honour to address National Authorities from all regions as the 22nd Annual Meeting of National Authorities concludes. I congratulate the participants on the successful conclusion of the event, conducted online for the first time in OPCW's history.

2020 has been a challenging year for all States Parties. The COVID-19 pandemic has posed unprecedented challenges to many aspects of our work. In response, we have seen Member States and the Secretariat adapt and innovate to keep this crucial work going. The Secretariat has continued to provide capacity-building support to States Parties in order to deliver on its mandate. As in-person capacity-building support is currently not possible, the Secretariat has been worked very hard to reformat existing programmes and activities for online delivery, so that it can continue to deliver for States Parties. This Annual Meeting has been another successful example of this. I thank the TS Team for its excellent organisation and conduct of the Annual Meeting.

I appreciate the presence of more than 165 representatives from 94 States Parties of the OPCW who actively participated and contributed to the success of this meeting. Lively attendance underscores countries' commitment to enhancing cooperation and the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention

I wish to thank the International Cooperation and Assistance Division for all its hard work and its excellent organisation of this event. I also thank the experts from various parts of the Technical Secretariat for providing useful information, updates and insights.

It is heartening to see that National Authorities have taken advantage of this opportunity to share, discuss and learn from experiences, good practices, and strategies from each of the five OPCW regions as well as national best practices in implementation of the Convention. Special thanks to the regional coordinators for providing a comprehensive overview of what has been done in all five regions despite the restrictions under the pandemic. National Authorities have also benefited from being briefed on recent developments under Articles VI, VII, X, and XI of the Convention and were provided with updates on policy-related issues.

As noted by the Director-General in his opening remarks, the Secretariat has responded to the challenges of the pandemic in 2020 by re-shaping traditional in-person training, maximising the potential of technology solutions, in order to continue meeting the capacity-building needs of States Parties. This experience has provided us with important new tools for capacity-

building which will in the future complement and enhance the in-person training provided by the Secretariat, which will resume as soon as conditions permit.

I trust that this meeting yielded tangible outcomes in our collective efforts towards a world free of chemical weapons and with enhanced peace and security. There is still much work that needs to be done to reach that goal, and that can only be achieved through States Parties working in close collaboration and partnership for this shared goal.

Thank you.
