



107th Session
8 – 11 October 2024

EC-107/DG.19
C-29/DG.13
20 September 2024
Original: ENGLISH

NOTE BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

ANNUAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN FOR THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION DURING THE PERIOD 16 AUGUST 2023 TO 15 AUGUST 2024

1. This Note has been prepared in accordance with the action plan for the universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention (the Convention), which was adopted by the Executive Council (the Council) at its Twenty-Third Meeting (EC-M-23/DEC.3, dated 24 October 2003) at the recommendation of the First Review Conference¹ (RC-1/5, dated 9 May 2003). In the action plan, the Council requested that the Director-General submit to the Conference of the States Parties (the Conference) at its regular sessions an annual report on the implementation of the plan, and to keep the Council regularly informed, so that the Conference and the Council “may review progress and monitor its implementation effectively” (EC-M-23/DEC.3).
2. Following the adoption of the action plan, at successive sessions, including Review Conferences, the Conference reviewed the action plan on universality, reaffirmed its validity, urged the remaining States not Party to join the Convention, and requested that the Technical Secretariat (the Secretariat) continue with its implementation.
3. In particular, the Third Review Conference reiterated that “the universality of the Convention is essential to achieving its object and purpose and to enhancing the security of States Parties, as well as international peace and security” (paragraph 9.33 of RC-3/3*, dated 19 April 2013).
4. The Third Review Conference strongly urged all remaining States not Party to the Convention to ratify or accede to it as a matter of urgency and without preconditions; requested the States Parties to further intensify their efforts with all States not Party to encourage them to ratify or accede to the Convention at the earliest; requested the Secretariat and the Director-General to make full use of all available opportunities and resources, including new mechanisms such as special envoys, as and when considered appropriate by the Director-General, to pursue this goal at all levels, including in close cooperation with other international, regional, and subregional organisations; and requested the policy-making organs to continue to annually review ongoing efforts to achieve universality.

¹ Review Conference = Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.



5. This report provides an overview of recent developments regarding the status of participation in the Convention and the universality activities undertaken by the Secretariat since the last annual report on the implementation of the action plan (EC-104/DG.23 C-28/DG.14, dated 28 September 2023), and covers the period 16 August 2023 to 15 August 2024.
6. As at 15 August 2024, there were 193 States Parties to the Convention, and four States that had not ratified or acceded to it. Of these, one had signed the Convention and three were non-signatories. The Annex to this Note lists the States that were not Party to the Convention as at 15 August 2024.
7. Throughout the reporting period, the Secretariat continued reaching out to the remaining States not Party and actively promoted universal adherence to the Convention within the framework of the action plan for universality.
8. The Director-General continued to accord high priority to universality and maintained high-level contacts with representatives of States not Party to create awareness and sustain a positive dialogue on the importance of joining the Convention. The Director-General made full use of his contacts with States Parties and other international organisations and their organs to underline the importance of universality and to build support for the efforts of the Secretariat in this regard.
9. The Secretariat continued to promote participation of representatives of States not Party in various OPCW-related events and activities, including the Twenty-Eighth Session of the Conference.
10. The activities carried out by the Secretariat to promote the universality of the Convention are detailed below. These activities were financially supported mainly through the Programme and Budget of the OPCW.
11. During the period under review, Israel remained the only signatory State to the Convention. The Secretariat has maintained contacts with representatives of Israel at the Embassy of Israel in the Netherlands. At the Twenty-Eighth Session of the Conference, eight representatives of Israel registered as observers. In addition, the Ambassador of Israel to the Netherlands delivered a statement to the Conference.
12. There are three remaining countries that are neither signatories nor States Parties to the Convention, namely the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, and South Sudan.
13. Over the reporting period, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea did not formally respond to ongoing attempts by the Secretariat to initiate contact, or to invitations to participate in OPCW-related activities.
14. The Secretariat maintained contact with representatives of Egypt at its Embassy in The Hague, the Netherlands, and at its Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York, and continued to invite them to participate in OPCW-related activities.

15. Concerning South Sudan, the Secretariat continued its high level of engagement with representatives of South Sudan at its Embassy in Brussels, Belgium, and continued to invite them to participate in OPCW-related activities. At the CHEMEX Africa chemical emergency response exercise for African countries, held from 23 September to 5 October 2023 in Algiers, Algeria, the Director-General met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of South Sudan. They discussed South Sudan's accession to the Convention and issued a joint communiqué stating the intent to work together to complete the accession process as soon as possible. The meeting took place with the financial support of the Government of Canada.
16. At the Twenty-Eighth Session of the Conference, the Deputy Head of Mission of the Embassy of South Sudan in Brussels attended and delivered a statement to the Conference. Representatives of South Sudan also participated in other OPCW activities, such as the annual briefing for delegations that are not based in The Hague on 3 November 2023 at the Centre for Chemistry and Technology, and the annual meeting for National Authorities for African States Parties from 11 to 13 June 2024 in Yaoundé, Cameroon. In addition, on 13 June 2024, the Director-General sent a letter to the new Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the Honourable Ramadan Mohammed Abdallah Goc, congratulating him on his appointment and recalling the commitment of South Sudan and the Secretariat to complete the accession process as soon as possible.
17. The Secretariat will continue to assign high priority to the fulfilment of the goal of universality as established in the action plan and the relevant decisions of the Council and the Conference. In this respect, the Secretariat renews its call to States Parties to provide political and financial support for its efforts and activities in this area and expresses its gratitude to those who have done so.
18. As in the past, the promotion of universal adherence to the Convention will be pursued through the utilisation of all available resources and opportunities, including diplomatic channels, international forums, and cooperation with States Parties and the United Nations, as well as with other international and regional organisations. This will be done in close collaboration with the facilitator for the implementation of the action plan for the universality of the Convention, Ms Lucía Rodríguez Fetzer (Guatemala), and interested States Parties.
19. Given the limited number of States not Party, the strategy of the Secretariat in implementing the action plan focuses on a bilateral approach. As such, the Secretariat will remain sensitive to the varying stages of progress in terms of ratification of or accession to the Convention and will maintain its proactive pursuit of a strategy of tailored activities for each State not Party. The Secretariat will use opportunities arising in each case and continue to urge States not Party to join the Convention, or to facilitate their respective internal processes with a view to gaining their membership as soon as possible. Given the foreseeable challenges to achieving full universality of the Convention, the Director-General continues to urge all States Parties to further intensify their own efforts to realise this goal.

Annex

**STATES NOT PARTY TO THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION
AS AT 15 AUGUST 2024**

SIGNATORY STATES THAT HAD NOT RATIFIED THE CONVENTION

	State	Date of Signature
1.	Israel	13 January 1993

STATES THAT HAD NEITHER SIGNED NOR ACCEDED TO THE CONVENTION

	State
1.	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
2.	Egypt
3.	South Sudan

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