



107th Session
8 – 11 October 2024

EC-107/DEC.10
10 October 2024
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DECISION

REHIRING OF INSPECTORS

The Executive Council,

Mindful of the paramount importance of having within the Technical Secretariat (the Secretariat) of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) experienced experts with the requisite skills and expertise to meet OPCW operational requirements and of maintaining within the Secretariat chemical weapons-specific expertise;

Noting the addendum on the subject of the impact of the decision on the rehiring of inspectors (EC-106/DG.8/Add.1 C-29/DG.4/Add.1, dated 3 October 2024) to the report by the Director-General on implementation of the tenure policy in 2023 (EC-106/DG.8 C-29/DG.4, dated 3 June 2024);

Noting also the assessment provided in EC-106/DG.8/Add.1 C-29/DG.4/Add.1 that during and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, junior inspectors have had fewer opportunities to reach optimum levels of operational experience;

Noting further the expected phased return to the normal level of Article VI inspection activities, as well as the fact that the implementation of the OPCW's tenure policy has resulted in a significant turnover of inspectors in 2023 (35 inspectors, including 21 Inspection Team Leaders, who reached the end of their regular tenure);

Recalling that the Third Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (the Third Review Conference) stressed the importance for the Secretariat to maintain verification expertise relating to chemical weapons and requested the policy-making organs to support this objective;

Recalling also that the Third Review Conference underlined the importance of the Secretariat maintaining and further developing technical capabilities, expertise, and the necessary preparedness;

Recalling further that, in a decision entitled "OPCW Staff Regulations" (C-IV/DEC.25, dated 2 July 1999), the Conference of the States Parties (the Conference) at its Fourth Session adopted Staff Regulation 4.4;

Mindful that the OPCW is a non-career organisation and that the total length of service for staff is seven years, except as otherwise specified;



Recalling the provisions contained in paragraph 44 of Article VIII of the Chemical Weapons Convention (the Convention), including, inter alia, that “[t]he paramount consideration in employment of the staff and in the determination of the conditions of service shall be the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity”, and that “[d]ue regard shall be paid to the importance of recruiting the staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible”, and **also recalling** the decision of the Conference at its Twenty-Third Session (C-23/DEC.9, dated 19 November 2018) to adopt an amendment to OPCW Staff Regulation 4.2 “recognising also the need to take into account considerations of gender balance” in Secretariat recruitment processes;

Emphasising that the recruitment and selection process for staff members of the Secretariat should continue to be undertaken in a transparent and accountable fashion, bearing in mind the interrelationship between the tenure policy of the Organisation and the selection process by which staff members are recruited by the Secretariat;

Recalling the decision on the rehiring of inspectors by the Conference at its Twenty-Seventh Session (C-27/DEC.9, dated 28 November 2022), in which the Conference authorised the Director-General to continue to rehire individuals who have previously been designated as OPCW inspectors and decided that the matter be reviewed by the Conference at its Twenty-Ninth Session in 2024; and

Considering, on the basis of the experience acquired through the implementation of the decisions on the rehiring of inspectors (C-19/DEC.11, dated 4 December 2014; C-22/DEC.14, dated 30 November 2017; C-24/DEC.10, dated 28 November 2019; and C-27/DEC.9) and the assessment provided in EC-106/DG.8/Add.1 C-29/DG.4/Add.1, that the rehiring mechanism remains an important component for ensuring the necessary skills and knowledge in the Inspectorate Division, and that it remains a critical operational requirement to ensure continuity under the Inspectorate Division;

Hereby:

Recommends that the Conference at its Twenty-Ninth Session:

1. decide that the Director-General may continue to rehire individuals who have previously been designated as OPCW inspectors;
2. decide also that the Director-General shall resort to rehiring former inspectors, team leaders and team members, as an exceptional and interim measure, only if no other qualified candidates with relevant experience are available, including through promotions;
3. decide further that a former staff member of the OPCW who has been rehired shall otherwise be subject to the normal terms and conditions of an OPCW staff member; that the term of service of a rehired staff member shall be limited to up to three years and not subject to any further prolongation or recurrence; and that the starting date of an inspector’s initial contract, as a rehired inspector, shall be preceded by a break in service from his or her previous contract with the Organisation;

4. decide further that recruitment rules for rehiring will apply in accordance with the Convention and the existing OPCW Staff Regulations. In any case, former inspectors could not be rehired if they were to exceed the retirement age of the Organisation during the period of their initial contract as a rehired inspector;
5. request that the Director-General continue to ensure capacity-building and training activities in the Inspectorate Division, as well as other relevant international cooperation and assistance programmes such as the Associate Programme for, inter alia, potential inspector applicants with the appropriate academic qualifications, including those from States Parties that have little or no declarable chemical industries or activities;
6. request also that the Director-General continue to integrate knowledge management in the work of rehired inspectors, noting the importance of the sharing of experiential knowledge as one of the core assets of the Organisation, and leverage their expertise through a systematic approach to knowledge sharing, including, inter alia, cross-training, knowledge transfer, contribution to technical databases, and tradecraft mentoring;
7. request further that the Director-General continue to pay due consideration to geographical and gender balance in accordance with paragraph 44 of Article VIII of the Convention, and the decision of the Conference at its Twenty-Third Session (C-23/DEC.9) when rehiring inspectors;
8. request further that the Director-General use the rehiring mechanism sparingly, ensuring that no more than 20% of the total authorised inspector posts in the Secretariat at any given time are staffed by rehired inspectors, and request that the Director-General present, as far as feasible, a projection of the estimated need for rehired inspectors;
9. request further that the Director-General continue to report to the Council on the implementation and impact of this decision, including an assessment of the transfer of knowledge and experience by the rehired inspectors, as well as on a programme of training to develop future generations of inspectors that would meet the Organisation's needs; and
10. decide to review the implementation of this decision at its Thirty-First Session, in 2026.

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