OPCW   **Technical Secretariat**

NOTE BY THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT

ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION OF
ANNUAL DECLARATIONS ON PAST ACTIVITIES
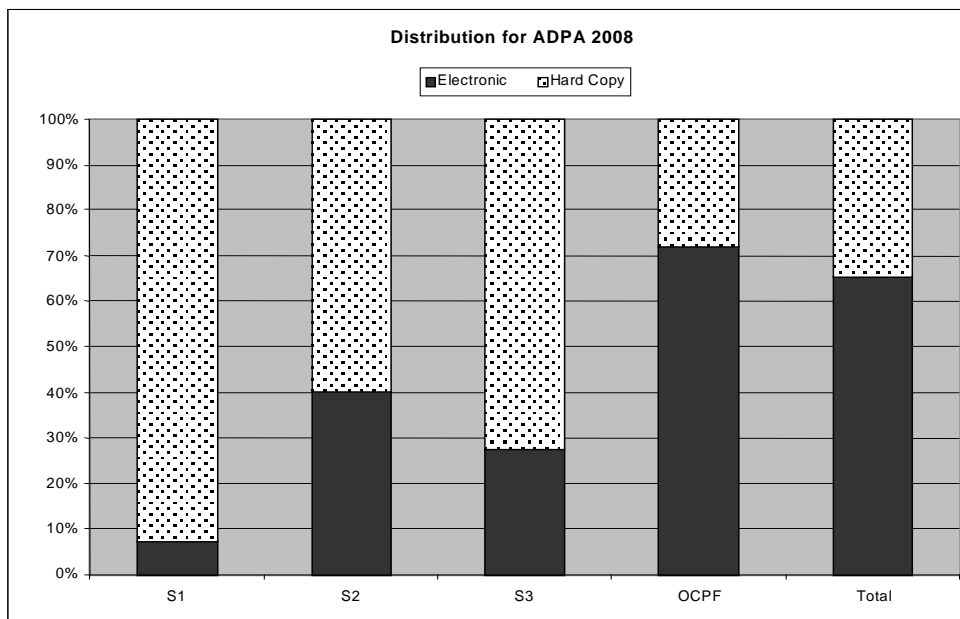## AS AT 31 MAY 2010

Introduction and overview

1.   Arrangements have been in place since 2006 for States Parties to submit their declarations in electronic form. This helps to improve the quality of the data received in a number of ways—for example, by facilitating the electronic importation of data into the Verification Information System (VIS) of the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter "the Secretariat").

2.   During the National Authorities days in November 2008, the Secretariat released for the first time the software tool, "Electronic Declarations for National Authorities" (EDNA), the use of which further enhances the quality of the data received. The first version of the tool enabled annual declarations of other chemical production facilities (OCPFs) and of aggregate national data (AND) to be prepared and submitted in electronic format. In November 2009, the second version of the EDNA was released. This version has been improved by the introduction of additional functions—one which enables States Parties to generate declarations of Schedule 2 and Schedule 3 facilities and another function that has expanded the AND module by the inclusion of an option for the automated aggregation of the information on chemicals declared by States Parties in regard to Schedule 2 and 3 facilities.

3.   Consequently, version 2.0 of the EDNA was to be used by States Parties to generate annual declarations on past activities (ADPAs) for Schedule 2 and 3 facilities, for OCPFs, and for AND, and also for annual declarations on anticipated activities (ADAAs) for Schedule 2 and 3 facilities. It was expected that the release of version 2.0 would encourage more States Parties to make use of the EDNA.

4.   This Note presents an update on the overview of the status of submission of ADPAs in electronic format, information that was first provided in a Note by the Secretariat in 2009 (S/773/2009, dated 18 June 2009).

Declarations received in electronic format

5.   An ADPA for 2008 was submitted by 81 States Parties. Of these, 21 declarations—or 26%—were submitted electronically. Five declarations were made in common transmission file structure (CTFS) format. Sixteen declarations were submitted in Extensible Markup Language (XML) format; 12 of these 16 were prepared using the EDNA.

6.   For ADPA 2008, the electronic declarations cover 3685 of the 5636 plant sites declared in total (up from 1459 for ADPA 2007). In other words, 65% of all declared plant sites were declared electronically.[1]

CHART 1:   PERCENTAGE OF PLANT SITES DECLARED IN ELECTRONIC FORMAT FOR ADPA 2008
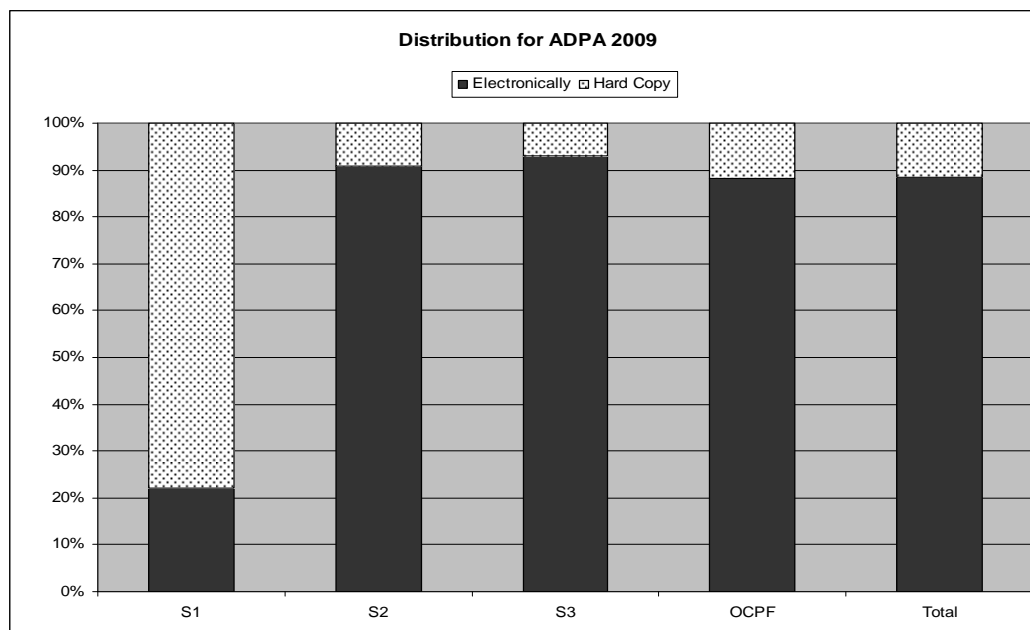

7.   As at 31 May 2010, an ADPA for 2009 was submitted by 77 States Parties.[2] Of these, 30 declarations—or 39%—were declared electronically. Three declarations were still made in CTFS format. Twenty-seven declarations were submitted in XML format (compared to 16 in the preceding year); 23 of these were prepared using the EDNA.

8.   For ADPA 2009, the electronic declarations cover 4988 of the 5636 plant sites[3] declared in total. In other words, 88% of all declared plant sites were declared electronically (up from 65% in the preceding year and 26% for ADPA 2007).

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[1]   The number of declared plant sites contained in a declaration on the basis of ADPAs for 2007 was selected as a measure for comparing the ADPAs for 2007, the ADPAs for 2008, and the ADPAs for 2009.

[2]   This figure excludes "nil" declarations.

[3]   Please see footnote 1.

CHART 2: PERCENTAGE OF PLANT SITES DECLARED IN ELECTRONIC FORMAT FOR ADPA 2009

Processing of electronic declarations

9.   A manual, intermediate control step has been put into place to address technical problems that arise from time to time: In order to prevent errors in the VIS, all electronic declarations are screened and, if necessary, corrected, prior to their being uploaded.

10.   The Secretariat has worked with the States Parties concerned to resolve any technical problems they have encountered when submitting electronic declarations. While some technical problems can be resolved by the Secretariat, continued successful implementation of electronic declarations also depends on States Parties closely following the relevant protocols and guidelines that have been issued by the Secretariat.

11.   Most States Parties that submit an electronic declaration also submit a hard-copy declaration as the "authoritative" version. This requires the Secretariat to validate the consistency between both versions. As developments with electronic declarations continue, it is recommended that, whenever possible, States Parties consider making their formal submissions in electronic format, thus removing the need for a hard copy.[4]

Summary and perspective

12.   The introduction of the EDNA—versions 1.0 and 2.0—has led to a significant rise in the number of States Parties submitting declarations in electronic format. This trend can be summarised as follows:

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[4]   The Secretariat is aware that this might not be possible for all States Parties, given that some have legislation that always requires a hard copy to be submitted; this hard copy takes precedence.

(a) The number of States Parties submitting ADPAs for 2009 in electronic form increased by nine to thirty (compared to twenty-one ADPAs for 2008).

(b) Two States Parties have moved away from the CTFS format and have used the EDNA for their ADPAs for 2009; other States Parties have indicated their intention to use the EDNA for future declarations.

(c) In terms of ADPAs for 2009, at the plant-site level, more than 88% of the declarations were submitted in electronic format; 65% of States Parties did so for their ADPAs for 2008, and less than 30% submitted their ADPAs for 2007 in electronic format.

13. The Secretariat welcomes the rising trend of submission of declarations in electronic format. Support and training are available to those States Parties wishing to use the EDNA; interested States Parties are requested to contact the Declarations Branch.

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