



## **Opening Remarks by the OPCW Deputy Director-General at the Opening Session of the Associate Programme 2019**

**As delivered on 26 July 2019, The Hague, Netherlands**

Distinguished participants,  
Dear colleagues,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I warmly welcome all of you to the 20th edition of the OPCW Associate Programme. I thank all those who have made this year's Programme possible, including Permanent Representations, National Authorities, and the national chemical industry associations of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, China, Finland, Germany, Indonesia, Italy, Malaysia, Poland, Spain, and Qatar. I also wish to express our appreciation to the University of Surrey, the World Customs Organization, the European Chemical Industry Council, the European Association of Chemical Distributors, the European Chemicals Agency, and the Dutch Customs Authorities for their valuable support.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Associate Programme is the OPCW's flagship capacity-building programme designed to facilitate the national implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The Programme provides training to representatives of industry, academic institutions, and government authorities to broaden the pool of experts and professionals available to build national capacities. It has had a long and successful history. In fact, by this September the OPCW will have trained over 500 Associates. This is a significant achievement and underscores the Programme's importance to the States Parties. The Secretariat also directly benefits from the Programme; as over 20 former participants joined the Technical Secretariat. The key advantage of the Associate Programme is its international nature and unique combination of theory and practice.

As participants, you will take part in stimulating and challenging activities, that will develop the expertise and skills needed to operate safely and effectively in a modern chemical industry setting. Throughout the Programme, you will be trained by experts from world-class universities and staff from the Secretariat, and you will be exposed to excellent industrial facilities.

As much as you will learn from our experts, I also urge you to reach out to your fellow Associates. It is just as valuable to build connections with them and learn from their experiences. I invite everyone to enthusiastically discuss issues of interest and share your knowledge and best practices.

You will also hear about our Alumni Network, which serves as a vibrant professional forum for former Associates to share scientific information and views. When you return home, we hope that you will serve as an advocate and resource for the implementation of the Convention, as well as for the promotion of the peaceful uses of chemistry.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Convention remains a comprehensive and robust disarmament treaty that has been the basis for the verifiable destruction of over 97% of the world's declared chemical weapons. Nonetheless, to make our gains permanent, we must also dedicate ourselves to preventing the re-emergence of these weapons. Furthermore, we will continue to foster international cooperation, to advance assistance and protection, to raise awareness and cultivate relevant expertise among our stakeholders, and to ensure that chemistry is exclusively used for peaceful purposes.

The Associate Programme is designed to further advance these goals, as well as to tackle emerging challenges. And the Technical Secretariat is committed to its constant improvement. Based on a yearly needs-assessment, we consider the latest developments in science, technology, and the chemical industry, which are then reflected in the Programme's curriculum. With your vital feedback, we will continue to address new trends and issues in relation to implementing the Convention.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I have no doubt that your efforts over the next nine weeks will be fruitful and rewarding for your careers. I wish you all a productive and enjoyable time and I hereby officially launch the OPCW Associate Programme 2019.

Thank you.

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