

**REPORT OF THE TWELFTH SESSION
OF THE ADVISORY BOARD ON EDUCATION AND OUTREACH****1. AGENDA ITEM ONE – Opening of the session**

- 1.1 The Advisory Board on Education and Outreach (ABEO) met for its Twelfth Session from 8 to 10 February 2022. The meeting was conducted in a virtual format as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
- 1.2 The Secretary to the ABEO opened the session at 13:00 CET on 8 February 2022 and facilitated the first segment of the meeting. She welcomed the Board members as well as observers from the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC) and the OPCW Scientific Advisory Board (SAB).
- 1.3 A list of participants is contained in the Annex to this report.

2. AGENDA ITEM TWO – Welcome address by the Director-General¹

- 2.1 The Director-General welcomed all Board members and observers to the Twelfth Session of the ABEO and thanked the outgoing Chairperson, Dr Johannes-Georg Weinig, for his able leadership in chairing the work of the Board in 2021. The Director-General commented that the composition of the Board, with 11 new experts, reflected geographical diversity, with all geographical groups represented, and respected gender balance. Indeed, for the first time, 7 out of 15 experts serving on the Board were women, thanks to an adapted call for nominations encouraging the presentation of female candidates. The Director-General added that the Board's geographically diverse membership and wide variety of expertise and backgrounds would benefit its work. The Director-General updated Board members on progress in the project for the new OPCW Centre for Chemistry and Technology (ChemTech Centre), scheduled to become operational in 2023. The ChemTech Centre will support, among other activities, education and outreach efforts. The Director-General further added that raising awareness of the OPCW and its mission would continue to be a priority in the Board's work, in particular assisting the OPCW in connecting with wider audiences such as academia, civil society, and young professionals. The Director-General also mentioned that the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter "the Secretariat") was currently assessing the recommendations provided by the ABEO temporary working group (TWG) on e-learning. He further noted the need for the Board's work to focus on e-learning enhancement, with a particular focus on the development of

¹ <https://www.opcw.org/media-centre/news/2022/02/opcw-director-general-welcomes-new-members-advisory-board-education-and->



e-learning modules for universities, as well as the creation of educational tools and resources that the Secretariat would offer to National Authorities. The Director-General also mentioned the supportive role that the Board and its members could play in raising awareness of professional opportunities at the OPCW, particularly in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean, with the aim of increasing the number of applications from these regions.

- 2.2 The subsequent discussion focused on outreach and on the challenges faced by the OPCW during the pandemic. The Director-General commented that in the last two years the Secretariat had to deal with multiple restrictions because of COVID-19-related measures. The Secretariat had adapted to the situation using different online systems that worked well and fostered inclusiveness in various meetings and activities. The online meetings had functioned well, even though they could not replace in-person meetings, events, and activities.

3. AGENDA ITEM THREE – Adoption of the agenda

The ABEO adopted the following agenda for its Twelfth Session:

1. Opening of the session
2. Welcome address by the Director-General
3. Adoption of the agenda
4. *Tour de table* among the members of the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach and observers: introduction, area of expertise, and intended contribution to the work of the Board
5. Election of a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson for 2022
6. Remarks by the Chairperson of the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach
7. Appointment of a drafting committee
8. Presentation by the Secretary to the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach of the organisational structure of the Technical Secretariat: functions of each division
9. Public outreach and the OPCW's online presence: Ms Anne Glick, Public Affairs Branch
10. Update by the Secretary to the ABEO on latest developments, with a particular focus on the work of the Board and Project 5A (development of e-learning modules) and Project 5B (translation and dissemination of education and outreach tools and materials)
11. Update on the work of the ABEO temporary working group on e-learning, with a focus on the development of a content pack for universities: Prof. Rocael Hernández Rizzardini and Dr Daniella Suger
12. Discussion on the development of modules for universities

13. Assistance of the Board in raising awareness of professional opportunities at the OPCW, with a focus on Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean: Ms Veronika Stromšíková, Director of the Office of Strategy and Policy
 14. Update on the SAB's work and main developments at the last meeting: Dr Craig Cormick
 15. Election among ABEO members of a second observer to the SAB
 16. Contribution of the ABEO to the United Nations Secretary-General's report on disarmament and non-proliferation education 2022
 17. Alumni network and its role
 18. Future intersessional work and dates for the Thirteenth Session of the ABEO
 19. Any other business
 20. Closure of the meeting
- 4. AGENDA ITEM FOUR – *Tour de table* among the members of the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach and observers: introduction, area of expertise, and intended contribution to the work of the Board**

A tour de table took place among Board members and observers, with a particular focus on their competencies, areas of expertise, and intended contribution to the work of the Board.

- 5. AGENDA ITEM FIVE – Election of a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson for 2022**
- 5.1 The Rules of Procedure for the ABEO and its temporary working groups² state that the Board “shall appoint by consensus a Chair and a Vice-Chair by annual election from among its members”. The Secretary informed the Board that the Secretariat had registered the candidacies of Mr Shahab Ud Din as Chairperson and of Dr Graciela González as Vice-Chairperson. The Secretariat sent an e-mail to all Board members on 20 January 2022 informing them of these two candidacies and of the possibility of putting forward additional candidates, should there be any interest, by 28 January 2022. No additional notifications of candidacy were received by the Secretariat.
 - 5.2 The Secretary to the Board highlighted that Mr Shahab Ud Din had been the Vice-Chairperson of the ABEO in 2021 and was serving his second term on the Board. She added that Mr Shahab Ud Din knew the Organisation well and had valuable experience in OPCW matters, especially in regard to National Authorities. Dr Graciela González from the University of Buenos Aires, working as a specialist in chemical and environmental sciences, had broad experience in directing projects and training different teams of experts.
 - 5.3 The Board elected by consensus Mr Shahab Ud Din as its Chairperson and Dr Graciela González as its Vice-Chairperson for 2022.

²

Document EC-81/DG.14 (dated 4 March 2016).

6. AGENDA ITEM SIX – Remarks by the Chairperson of the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach

The Chairperson of the ABEO, Mr Shahab Ud Din, thanked Board members for their confidence and support. He added that it was an honour to serve as the Chairperson and that he hoped that the Board would be producing many good materials and outcomes. The Chairperson recalled that the Board worked for peace and security, and that chemical disarmament and chemical safety and security were among the important areas on which to focus. While the field was quite vast, the work of the Board could have an impact on target audiences ranging from academia, National Authorities, civil society, or young professionals. Mr Shahab Ud Din highlighted two important milestones by the Board, previously mentioned by the Director-General: the Strategic Plan adopted by the Board in 2021 and the improvement of the Secretariat's e-learning offering, which has just begun, based on the set of recommendations prepared by the TWG on e-learning. The work of the Board would continue to focus on these important aspects.

7. AGENDA ITEM SEVEN – Appointment of a drafting committee

The ABEO appointed Mr Shahab Ud Din, Dr Craig Cormick, Dr Richard Guthrie, Dr Ladislava Navrátilová, and Prof. Vicente Garrido Rebolledo to the drafting committee.

8. AGENDA ITEM EIGHT – Presentation by the Secretary to the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach of the organisational structure of the Technical Secretariat: functions of each division

The Secretary to the Board delivered a presentation on the structure of the Secretariat and the main functions of each of its divisions.

9. AGENDA ITEM NINE – Public outreach and the OPCW's online presence: Ms Anne Glick, Public Affairs Branch

- 9.1 Ms Anne Glick delivered a presentation on public outreach and the OPCW's online presence. She explained that the mission of the Public Affairs Branch (PAB) was to present the face of the OPCW, amplify its voice, extend its reach, and raise its profile, all with the aim of conveying the ongoing relevance of the Organisation and its global endeavour for a world permanently free of chemical weapons. She further commented on the variety of other PAB responsibilities and talked about the diverse external audiences targeted by the branch. Ms Glick noted the difference between the extranet (known as Catalyst), which fell under the responsibility of the Secretariat for the Policy-Making Organs, and the public OPCW website, which fell under the responsibility of the PAB. She noted that the OPCW website is an enormous public resource to which the PAB constantly added new content. After explaining that the content was not fully multilingual, Ms Glick touched upon the OPCW's online presence, with a particular focus on social media. She also informed the Board about the set of videos entitled "OPCW Basics", which had been created in 2020, and three science-focused videos which had been created in 2021. Public outreach was conducted primarily through group visits to the OPCW, of which 80% were virtual in 2021. Ms Glick invited the ABEO members to encourage interested parties in their networks to request a group visit (virtual or in-person) via the OPCW website.

- 9.2 The subsequent discussion among ABEO members focused on the challenges after returning to normal, the current state of the digital transformation of the OPCW, the digital strategy for the coming years, and the existence of funds to support universities and think tanks to conduct public outreach activities.
- 9.3 On the OPCW's e-learning strategy, Ms Glick mentioned that a cross-divisional working group had been exploring different platforms for different audiences and that progress was being made.

10. AGENDA ITEM TEN – Update by the Secretary to the ABEO on latest developments, with a particular focus on the work of the Board and Project 5A (development of e-learning modules) and Project 5B (translation and dissemination of education and outreach tools and materials)

- 10.1 The Secretary to the Board provided a short update on the latest developments, with a particular focus on the work of the ABEO, notably, the Strategic Plan adopted by the Board in 2021 and the Board's work on e-learning. She also referred to Project 5A on the development of e-learning modules and Project 5B on translation and dissemination of education and outreach tools and materials, both of which were funded by the European Union.³
- 10.2 Board members asked about the translation of materials beyond the OPCW official languages and the Secretary to the Board explained that nothing prevented the States Parties and National Authorities, as well as other institutions, from translating materials into additional languages in their respective countries. The Board agreed to encourage States Parties to use any of the educational materials and tools available on the OPCW website not subject to copyright and to translate them into their respective languages so that more language versions of these materials would be available in all regions.

11. AGENDA ITEM ELEVEN – Update on the work of the ABEO temporary working group on e-learning, with a focus on the development of a content pack for universities: Prof. Rocael Hernández Rizzardini and Dr Daniella Suger

Prof. Rocael Hernández Rizzardini and Dr Daniella Suger provided an update on the work by the ABEO TWG on e-learning, with a focus on the recommendation to create a content pack for universities. Prof. Hernández Rizzardini and Dr Suger highlighted that the creation of a content pack should be accompanied by the drafting of guidelines reflecting the way in which the content pack had been developed, which would help create more modules or similar materials in the future. In order to ensure that this content was used by professors as well as other academics and teaching staff, there was a need to develop a promotional action plan.

³ See “Council Decision (CFSP) 2019/538 of 1 April 2019 in support of activities of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in the framework of the implementation of the EU Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction”.

12. AGENDA ITEM TWELVE – Discussion on the development of modules for universities

- 12.1 The discussion on the development of modules for universities touched upon several aspects, such as how to engage professors and wider academic audiences, how to ensure that the e-learning modules would be used once created, the subject matter that should be covered by the modules, and the type of infrastructure or sustainable platform that would support these modules.
- 12.2 The Board agreed that this new era for e-learning was here to stay and that the work of the Board would focus on this area. It was further added that there was a need to identify enthusiastic professors or other eminent professionals that could act as leaders to promote these modules, once created. The Board also noted that this form of action would be a useful complement and enhancement to the activities of National Authorities, which could conduct outreach at the national level. Moreover, the Board identified two parallel tracks: on the one hand, activities and events organised by universities and think tanks to explain the content pack for universities and, on the other hand, side-events at the OPCW with professors in order to explain the necessity of widely using and integrating the modules into university curricula.
- 12.3 Board members recognised the value of a topic covering the rights and obligations of States Parties under the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter “the Convention”) in order that legal and political implications were well understood. This information could be very useful to students in law, international relations, political sciences, or public administration. It was suggested that first responders might also benefit from these modules for universities, given the relevant information they would contain.
- 12.4 It was noted that the software options for supporting e-learning activities had been undergoing significant developments in recent years, with new products being made available and some software platforms being discontinued. It was suggested that the set of modules could be made available through the OPCW website in ZIP format or even through a learning management system, so that the modules could be uploaded to a different platform if needed.

13. AGENDA ITEM THIRTEEN – Assistance of the Board in raising awareness of professional opportunities at the OPCW, with a focus on Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean: Ms Veronika Stromšíková, Director of the Office of Strategy and Policy

- 13.1 The Director of the Office of Strategy and Policy (OSP), Ms Veronika Stromšíková, introduced herself and congratulated the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson on their election. She mentioned that the human resources management at the Secretariat was working to raise awareness of professional opportunities at the OPCW worldwide. The Board could play a role in providing advice on how to increase outreach and awareness-raising in this regard, but Board members could also directly support this effort through their own training and outreach activities. Ms Stromšíková referred to the criteria for recruitment of staff at the OPCW, where no quotas regarding region or gender were applied, and where the paramount consideration in the recruitment of staff was efficiency, competence, and integrity, as set out in paragraph 44 of Article VIII of the Convention, adding that “[d]ue regard shall be paid to the importance of recruiting the staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible”.

- 13.2 The composition of fixed term staff showed that more needed to be done to ensure a diverse workforce at the Secretariat. Ms Stromšíková highlighted in particular the need to increase the pool of applicants from the regions of Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe. She encouraged the Board to think about how the ABEO could multiply outreach regarding professional opportunities at the OPCW, and to provide its advice on how to increase the pool of applicants from these regions. Ms Stromšíková added that vacancies ranged from linguists to inspectors, and that there was also a Junior Professional Officer Programme, requiring candidates wishing to work at the OPCW to be sponsored by the sending or sponsoring country and requiring signing an agreement with the OPCW to this effect.
- 13.3 In their discussion, Board members noted the importance of diversity in staffing at the OPCW. It was suggested that a possible initiative could be for Board members to start raising awareness about professional vacancies as part of their (online or in-person) courses, particularly in some regions. Having a short information package or leaflet prepared by the Secretariat to this end would be useful, so that Board members could distribute it among their course participants. The Secretariat could also raise awareness about these vacancies during its capacity-building events, particularly in Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean. Another possible action for the Secretariat could be to encourage applicants who made it to the final stage of the recruitment process, but were ultimately not selected, to apply for other professional vacancies at the OPCW, and to keep a roster of applicants. The role of regional bodies was highlighted, with a suggestion that there could be outreach to applicants within the framework of the OPCW's relationships with regional international organisations. As an example, in the Latin America and the Caribbean region there are a number of regional bodies such as the Caribbean Community, the Central American Integration System, the Southern Common Market, and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States. The topic could be included on the agenda of bilateral meetings between the OPCW and these regional organisations as well as in activities promoted by Member States in these forums.
- 13.4 There was a recognition that greater awareness of career opportunities at the OPCW would naturally follow on from greater public awareness of the OPCW itself in the under-represented regions. It was suggested that there should be annual reminders about the available educational packages, perhaps accompanied by a brief, public-facing annual report or flyer. In addition to aiming these materials at universities, there could be benefits in involving national academies of sciences, which could also be able to reproduce some of the materials in local languages.
- 13.5 Ms Stromšíková thanked the Board members for their valuable suggestions and noted that the Secretariat would explore them further. She mentioned that the information package on the OPCW could be a part of the modules for universities on the OPCW and its mission, and that the OSP would join forces with the PAB to increase outreach with academia. She added that the OPCW should be perceived as an interesting employer not only for chemists but also for a wider range of professionals, given the variety of interesting positions that were available.

14. AGENDA ITEM FOURTEEN – Update on SAB’s work and main developments at the last meeting: Dr Craig Cormick

Dr Craig Cormick provided an update on the role of the SAB and referred to the two observers of the ABEO to the SAB, who had been appointed by the Board at its Ninth Session. Dr Cormick commented that the second ABEO observer to the SAB, Prof. Alastair Hay, had completed his final term and that the Board would need to appoint a second observer with a scientific background, preferably in chemistry. Two SAB observers were also currently participating in ABEO sessions. Dr Cormick further mentioned that he had attended the Thirty-First⁴ and Thirty-Second⁵ Sessions of the SAB. He referred to current topics that were being dealt with by the SAB and highlighted that some of the current and future activities that the SAB was undertaking were linked with preparations for the Fifth Review Conference⁶ to be held in 2023. Dr Cormick further added that the Director-General could establish TWGs in consultation with SAB members, and mentioned the SAB’s current TWG on the analysis of biotoxins.

15. AGENDA ITEM FIFTEEN – Election among ABEO members of a second observer to the SAB

Dr Graciela González was appointed as a second observer to the SAB in 2022, and Prof. Mohd Jamil Maah and Prof. Supawan Tantayanon were appointed as observers for 2023.

16. AGENDA ITEM SIXTEEN – Contribution of the ABEO to the United Nations Secretary-General’s report on disarmament and non-proliferation education 2022

16.1 The Chairperson of the Board recalled that the OPCW had contributed to the United Nations Secretary-General’s reports on disarmament and non-proliferation education in 2012, 2014, 2016, and 2020. In 2020, the Board had contributed to the submission prepared by the Secretariat to the Secretary-General’s report. In 2022 this exercise would start in the second quarter of the year.

16.2 The Secretary to the Board commented that the United Nations Secretary-General’s report was a biennial compilation of work by governments, United Nations offices, international organisations, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in this realm. It was presented to the General Assembly and circulated to a wide audience of disarmament and non-proliferation educators. Operative paragraph 2 of United Nations General Assembly resolution 73/59 (2018) entitled “United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education” requests “the Secretary-General to prepare a report reviewing the results of the implementation of the recommendations and possible new opportunities for promoting disarmament and non-proliferation education”.

⁴ Document SAB-31/1 (dated 4 March 2021).

⁵ Document SAB-32/1 (dated 17 June 2021).

⁶ Review Conference = Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

- 16.3 The Secretary added that the 34 recommendations reflected in the 2002 United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education⁷ would be shared with Board members. These recommendations represented concrete activities that could and should be taken by governments, international organisations, NGOs, and relevant United Nations offices, and included recommendations to “prepare, adapt and disseminate a wider range of user-friendly educational material on disarmament and non-proliferation”, and to “translate its disarmament and non-proliferation educational material into all United Nations official languages and, when possible, into other languages for additional dissemination”.
- 16.4 The Secretariat would e-mail, at the end of March or in early April, a request to Board members to prepare a draft to be included in the Secretariat’s submission, taking into account that only the executive summary would be included in the report. The full submission of the OPCW would be posted on the website of the Office for Disarmament Affairs. If the United Nations followed the same deadline as two years ago, then the Secretariat would be required to submit its inputs for the Secretary-General’s report on around 15 May 2022.

17. AGENDA ITEM SEVENTEEN – Alumni network and its role

The Chairperson of the Board referred to the alumni network and its role. At its Eleventh Session, the Board had decided to create an alumni network with the aim of preserving as much knowledge on education and outreach matters as possible. This voluntary network of former ABEO members would volunteer its knowledge and expertise to the Secretariat at no cost. It was agreed that the alumni network would not entail any formal agreement and would not interfere with the ABEO’s role. Board members agreed at the Eleventh Session of the Board that the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson would send letters inviting outgoing and former ABEO members to join the network. The Secretariat would maintain the files with the e-mail addresses and other details of former Board members. The Board agreed that a joint letter, co-signed by the former and current Chairpersons and the Secretary to the ABEO, would be sent to former Board members shortly after the ABEO meeting. The Board agreed that the alumni network would communicate via e-mail.

18. AGENDA ITEM EIGHTEEN – Future intersessional work and dates for the Thirteenth Session of the ABEO

- 18.1 Regarding future intersessional work, the first step would be to work on the priorities set out in the Strategic Plan. In the next days, Board members would select priorities from the Strategic Plan as they deemed fit and work on them. A list with several education and outreach tools and materials would be sent by the Secretariat in the following weeks with a request to Board members to rate them from 1 to 10. The advice of the Board would be taken into consideration by the OSP when selecting educational resources to be translated and disseminated within the framework of Project 5B (funded by the European Union).
- 18.2 The Board agreed to hold its Thirteenth Session from 19 to 21 July 2022.

⁷ United Nations document A/57/124.

19. AGENDA ITEM NINETEEN – Any other business

The Secretariat provided the Board members with practical information regarding their travel to The Hague for the next session of the Board and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs identity cards issued for Board members by the MFA of the Netherlands.

20. AGENDA ITEM TWENTY – Closure of the meeting

The Chairperson of the ABEO closed the Twelfth Session of the Board at 14:23 on 10 February 2022.

Annex: List of Participants in the Twelfth Session of the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach

Annex

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE TWELFTH SESSION
OF THE ADVISORY BOARD ON EDUCATION AND OUTREACH**

1. Dr Graciela González
2. Dr Craig Cormick
3. Dr Jason Openo
4. Prof. Magda Bauta Solés
5. Dr Ladislava Navrátilová
6. Prof. Christopher Daase
7. Prof. Rocael Hernández Rizzardini
8. Prof. Mohd Jamil Maah
9. Dr Nezha Barakate
10. Prof. JaneFrances Ngozi Ihedioha
11. Mr Shahab Ud Din (Chairperson)
12. Prof. Ying Zhou
13. Prof. Vicente Garrido Rebolledo
14. Prof. Supawan Tantayanon
15. Dr Richard Guthrie
16. Prof. Marietjie Potgieter (observer: IUPAC)
17. Dr Imee Martinez (observer: SAB)
18. Dr Matteo Guidotti (observer: SAB)
19. Dr Adriana Bernacchi (observer: expert on e-learning)
20. Prof. Fatima Lamchouri (observer: expert on e-learning)
21. Dr Daniella Suger (observer: expert on e-learning)
22. Prof. Carlos Delgado Kloos (observer: expert on e-learning)
23. Ms Veronika Stromšíková, Director of the Office of Strategy and Policy

24. Ms Elisabeth Waechter, Head of Public Affairs Branch and OPCW Spokesperson
25. Ms Anne Glick, Public Affairs Officer, Public Affairs Branch
26. Ms Luisa Sánchez-Bravo, Senior Policy Officer and Secretary to the ABEO, Office of Strategy and Policy
27. Ms Ernesa Ademagić, Senior Project Assistant in the Office of Strategy and Policy
28. Mr Gorjan Damjanović, Network and Telecommunications Assistant, Operations, Infrastructure and Support
29. Ms Begimai Sataeva, Public Affairs Assistant, Public Affairs Branch

Absent: Mr William Garcia (observer: CEFIC)