



**REPORT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR VUSIMUZI PHILEMON MADONSELA
CHAIRPERSON OF THE OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON TERRORISM
TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AT ITS NINETY-NINTH SESSION**

1. Madam Chairperson, Director-General, distinguished colleagues, it is my pleasure to provide a short oral report of the meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism (OEWG-T) held on 22 February 2022.
2. The group continues to be guided by the decision of the Executive Council (“the Council”) on non-State actors (EC-86/DEC.9, dated 13 October 2017). The meeting provided an opportunity for participants to discuss the annual Note by the Director-General on the Status of the OPCW’s Contribution to Global Anti-Terrorism Efforts (“the annual Note”), which is being considered by the Council at its present session. The Note is a summary of counter-terrorism-related activities undertaken by the Technical Secretariat (“the Secretariat”) over the past year. As such, it is a valuable resource for considering the OPCW’s work in a holistic manner, and for helping to identify any gaps or areas that may require closer attention in the future.
3. In his opening remarks, the Director-General noted that the threat of non-State actors acquiring and using chemical weapons is a reality, and that the Organisation must therefore continue to enhance its ability to support States Parties in meeting this threat. He also noted that since its establishment the OEWG-T has been the primary platform for States Parties to exchange views on chemical terrorism and on how to address this subject through the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”). In this regard, the Director-General described the annual Note as a record of the Organisation’s work under the mandates given to it by States Parties and emphasised that the Group was well placed to approach the discussion accordingly.
4. The OEWG-T was then briefed by two members of the Secretariat: Mr Cormac O’Reilly, Senior Policy Officer in the Office of Strategy and Policy; and Mr Dawsar Drissi, Coordinator of the Africa Programme in the International Cooperation and Assistance Division.
5. Mr O’Reilly presented the main elements of the annual Note, also providing background and context, before highlighting key operative elements of Council decision EC-86/DEC.9 and comparing them to progress made in implementing the decision. He introduced the range of decisions and reports by the policy-making organs that inform the OPCW’s work in countering chemical terrorism and described how comprehensive implementation of the Convention addresses this. Mr O’Reilly went on to describe the content of the annual Note, listing the chief activities of the Secretariat across the areas of criminalisation of activities prohibited by the Convention; measures



to prevent hostile use of toxic chemicals by non-State actors; ensuring effective response to the hostile use of toxic chemicals; laboratory capacity and the Scientific Advisory Board; and the future role of the OPCW Centre for Chemistry and Technology. Finally, Mr O'Reilly displayed a summary of implementation of EC-86/DEC.9 both by the Secretariat and by States Parties. He suggested that the areas identified as requiring further attention be included in any ensuing discussions.

6. Mr Drissi then presented on the specific role of the OPCW Africa Programme and the importance of OPCW capacity building in countering chemical terrorism in Africa. He began by outlining the structure of the Programme, which is now in its fifth phase, as well as the approach followed by the Secretariat in supporting counter-terrorism efforts through the Programme. Mr Drissi then presented the results of relevant capacity-building activities delivered in Africa in 2021 in the areas of advancing national implementation of the Convention; strengthening controls over cross-border transfers of toxic chemicals to prevent access by non-State actors; enhancing protection and response capabilities; advancing chemical safety and security culture, standards, and practices; and strengthening the capabilities of chemical laboratories. He also noted current priorities and continued consultation and coordination with African States Parties on the Programme.
7. Following the presentations, there were interventions from the Director-General and several delegations. The Director-General reiterated the importance of national implementation of the Convention. Participants thanked the Director-General for the annual Note and underlined the importance of the activities referred to therein, including in capacity building. Participants noted the seriousness of the threat of chemical terrorism and suggested that more may need to be done to counter it. Some described the coming year as providing an opportunity to renew discussions on this matter, particularly in light of the Fifth Review Conference.¹
8. Madam Chairperson, following the discussion at the OEWG-T, I wish to make some comments about the modalities for policy review by the States Parties of the OPCW's contribution to countering chemical terrorism. Interventions made at the meeting demonstrated the importance we all attach to this threat. I am convinced that there is an appetite among States Parties to hold a policy discussion on how the Organisation can do more in this area. To that end, I intend to engage with the Chairperson of the Open-Ended Working Group for the Fifth Review Conference to consider how the issue could be included in the Working Group's agenda, and how the OEWG-T could be of assistance.
9. Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to the delegates and presenters for their participation. The next meeting of the OEWG-T is scheduled to take place prior to the 100th Session of the Executive Council. The date and modalities of the meeting will be communicated closer to the time.
10. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

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¹ The Fifth Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.