

THE ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS AT 25 SEMINAR

Date/Time: Friday, 20 May 2022, 9:30 – 13:30

Location: OPCW Headquarters

PROGRAMME

9:30 **Opening remarks: Ambassador Fernando Arias, Director-General of the OPCW**

Location: Ieper Room

9:45 **Chemical weapons disarmament and the future of the OPCW**

The Convention's achievements have been well recorded. Over 98% of the world lives under its protection, yet the world continues to face traditional and new threats, including the re-emergence of the use of chemical weapons. Can the OPCW build on its accomplishments in meeting its open-ended goal of preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons? This session will assess the status of the norm against chemical weapons use and how the OPCW is adapting to meet its current and future challenges, including through capacity building.

Location: Ieper Room

Speakers:

- Ms Joanneke Balfoort, Director of Security and Defence Policy, European External Action Service
- H.E. Mr Luis Vassy, Permanent Representative of the French Republic to the OPCW
- H.E. Mr Andrés Terán Parral, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Ecuador to the OPCW
- Dr Una Jakob, Research Associate at the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt

11:00 **Break for beverages and refreshments**

Location: Delegates' Lounge

11:15 **Countering chemical terrorism: Assessing the threat**

The threat of use by non-State actors of chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear weapons or related materials is a grave challenge to the international community. In the 25 years since its entry into force, States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention have consistently recognised the threat posed to the Convention by non-State actors. A number of Executive Council decisions have maintained that the full

and effective implementation of all provisions of the Convention is in itself a contribution to global counter-terrorism efforts, and have set out measures designed to prevent and respond to chemical terrorism. This session will explore the risk of chemical terrorism and how the OPCW can address it.

Location: Ieper Room

Speakers:

- Mr Ali Gakweli, Head of the National Authority of the Republic of Kenya
- Dr Richard Cupitt, Senior Fellow and Director, Partnerships in Proliferation Prevention, Stimson Centre
- Ms Hannah Black, Criminal Intelligence Analyst, INTERPOL
- Ms Veronika Stromsikova, Director of Strategy and Policy, OPCW

12:30 Reception hosted by the European Union

Location: Delegates' Lounge

13:30 End

SPEAKERS' BIOS

Session 1: Chemical weapons disarmament and the future of the OPCW



Ms Joanneke Balfourt, Director of Security and Defence Policy, European External Action Service

Joanneke Balfourt is the Director of Security and Defence Policy at the European External Action Service. Joanneke has been with the Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs for more than 25 years. She graduated from the University of Amsterdam with a law degree, specializing in international law, and a degree in political science. During her career at the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, she has worked as a project officer for human rights and humanitarian projects, responsible for political affairs at the Netherlands embassy in Moscow, first secretary within the Netherlands NATO delegation in Brussels, coordinator EU affairs within the ministry and head of the economic section at the embassy in London. In September 2013, she arrived at the embassy in Washington, D.C. as the deputy head of mission. From 2017 till mid 2020, she was the Dutch Ambassador to the Political and Security Committee of the European union in Brussels. Since June 2020 she is the Director Security and Defence at the European External Action Service.



H.E. Mr Luis Vassy, Permanent Representative of the French Republic to the OPCW

Ambassador Luis Vassy began his diplomatic career in 2004 at the French MFA, within the Asia and Oceania Directorate and afterwards at the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Division. He was then posted in Washington DC, before serving in the private offices to the Defense Minister and to the Veteran Affairs Minister. In 2017, he was appointed deputy chief of

staff to the Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs. Since 2019, he is Ambassador to the Kingdom of Netherlands and Permanent Representative to the OPCW. Ambassador Luis Vassy is a graduate of the *Ecole normale supérieure*, the *Institut d'études politiques* in Paris and the *Ecole nationale d'administration*.



H.E. Mr Andrés Terán Parral, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Ecuador to the OPCW

Ambassador Andrés Terán Parral, is a career diplomat with more than 36 years of experience in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility of Ecuador, having served in various missions, including Spain, Belgium, the European Union, the United States of America, Uruguay, Colombia, and Canada. Before his designation as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and Permanent Representative to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in 2019, he served as, inter alia, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs.



Dr Una Jakob, Senior Researcher at the Peace Research Institute in Frankfurt (PRIF)

Dr Una Jakob is a Senior Researcher at the Peace Research Institute in Frankfurt (PRIF), in the Department for International Security. She is specializing in arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation related to chemical and biological weapons. Her research topics include the work of the OPCW. She is co-Head of the interdisciplinary Working Group on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation of Biological and Chemical Weapons and a member of the research network CBWNet.

Moderator: Ms Yvonne Apea Mensah, Head of Political Affairs and Protocol, OPCW

Yvonne Apea Mensah joined the OPCW as Head, Political Affairs and Protocol, in February 2021. Following a brief legal career, Yvonne transitioned into multilateral diplomacy in 2002 and has since held various roles in political affairs and sustainable development. Prior to joining OPCW, Yvonne was Adviser and Head of Africa at the Commonwealth Secretariat where she also served as Deputy Conference Secretary for the Biennial Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings. Yvonne has worked in several positions at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, the World Trade Organisation, the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development, the Economist Intelligence Unit, and the African Development Bank. Yvonne holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Ghana, a qualifying certificate in law from the Ghana School of Law and a master's degree from Harvard Law School.

Session II: Countering chemical terrorism: Assessing the threat



Mr Ali Gakweli, Head of the National Authority of the Republic of Kenya

Mr Ali Gakweli is the head of Kenya's central chemical testing laboratory (Government Chemist Department) and also heads the National Authority for the implementation of the chemical weapon convention. He is Kenya's National Focal point for the EU Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) risk mitigation initiative. From 2013 to 2016, Mr. Gakweli successfully managed the EU CBRN project on the establishment of a CBRN national response plan to respond to incidents involving CBRN materials in Ghana and Kenya. He is currently one of the leading figures developing a national legislation on the strategic goods control (SGC) bill which seeks to manage trade and access to CBRN materials and technologies. He holds a bachelor's degree in chemistry from the University of Nairobi, and a master's degree in environmental management from the South Eastern Kenya University.



Dr Richard Cupitt, Senior Fellow and Director, Partnerships in Proliferation Prevention, Stimson Centre

Dr. Richard T. Cupitt is a Senior Fellow and Director of the Partnerships in Proliferation Prevention programme at the Stimson Center. He is an expert on WMD non-proliferation, export controls, and foreign policy. Prior to joining Stimson, he served as the Special Coordinator for the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 at the U.S. State Department, leading efforts to combat proliferation of WMD and their means of delivery, especially to non-state actors. Among other posts, from 2005 to 2012, he was an Expert for the Security Council's 1540 Committee, also serving as coordinator between 2010-2012..



Ms Hannah Black, Criminal Intelligence Analyst, INTERPOL

Ms Hannah Black is a Criminal Intelligence Analyst at INTERPOL, where her work includes examining data concerning criminal activity and helping national law enforcement agencies and decision-makers deal more effectively with policing environment uncertainties, prepare for new security challenges, and establish investigative priorities. Her areas of expertise include criminal intelligence analysis, intelligence methods, handling and dissemination. Before joining INTERPOL in 2022, she worked as an analyst for EUROPOL and for Police Scotland.



Ms Veronika Stromsikova, Director of Strategy and Policy, OPCW

Ms Veronika Stromsikova was appointed Director of Office of Strategy and Policy at the OPCW in June 2016. She is a lawyer by profession, specialising in International Law and Human Rights Law. Ms. Stromsikova is a career diplomat and has worked for the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 1999. She has held numerous multilateral posts at the Ministry, has been posted at the Czech Permanent Mission to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg (2002 - 2005) and served as Deputy Permanent Representative at the Czech Permanent Mission to the UN in

Geneva (2008 - 2013). Before joining the OPCW, she worked as Director of the United Nations Department (2014-2016). Her portfolio at the UN Department included UN affairs, disarmament affairs and UNESCO. Between 2014-2016, she was the Czech Government's Sherpa for the Nuclear Security Summit and the Vice-Chair of the Czech Commission to UNESCO.

Moderator: Ms Elisabeth Waechter, Head of Public Affairs and OPCW Spokesperson, OPCW

Elisabeth Waechter joined OPCW as Head of Public Affairs and Spokesperson in February 2022. Since 2005, she has served in a variety of public information and strategic communications roles across the United Nations system, including for the United Nations Environment Programme, UN Secretariat (New York and Vienna), and as Chief of Public Information for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO). Previously, Ms Waechter worked for the European Commission in Brussels and Kyiv, Ukraine. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Russian Studies from the University of London and a Master's degree in Communications from Leicester University (UK).