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**REPORT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR VUSIMUZI PHILEMON MADONSELA
CHAIRPERSON OF THE OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON TERRORISM
TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AT ITS 100TH SESSION**

1. Mr 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 27 June 2022.
2. The group continues to be guided by the decision of the Executive Council (hereinafter “the Council”) on non-State actors (EC-86/DEC.9, dated 13 October 2017). The decision recognises that the full and effective implementation of all provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention contributes to addressing the use of chemical weapons by non-State actors. It also underscores the role of the OPCW in preventing and responding to the threat posed by the use of chemical weapons by non-State actors.
3. The meeting featured presentations and discussions on regional approaches to coordination on chemical terrorism, and also provided an opportunity for an initial exchange on points for consideration in the context of the preparatory process for the Fifth Review Conference¹.
4. In his opening remarks, the Director-General noted that the threat of non-State actors developing, acquiring, and using chemical weapons continues to be a subject of grave concern, and that for this reason the topic of assessing the threat of chemical terrorism was chosen for one of the two panels at the seminar marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of the OPCW on 20 May. Noting the importance of regional perspectives in considering how the OPCW can adapt to the changing security context, he welcomed the two guest speakers. In addition, he encouraged all delegations to make full use of the opportunity offered by the Review Conference process to strengthen the Organisation’s efforts to counter chemical terrorism.
5. The Working Group was then briefed by Mr Ran van Reedt Dortland, Adviser to the European Union Counter-Terrorism Coordinator. Mr van Reedt Dortland outlined the European Union’s approach to counter-terrorism efforts. Addressing threat assessment and action in the area of chemical terrorism, he introduced the objectives of the European Union CBRN² Action Plan, which takes an all-hazards approach, and outlined a number of projects and activities undertaken by the European Union.

¹ Review Conference = Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

² CBRN = chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear.



6. This was followed by a briefing by Dr Loke Weng Keong, Head of Secretariat of the Network of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) CBRN Defence Experts. After outlining the main purposes for the Network, he explained ASEAN's focus on a proactive and coordinated response to the CBRN threat. Dr Loke discussed the value of activities such as tabletop exercises in helping to recognise the difference between terrorist attacks and other incidents. He also reiterated the importance of information sharing on best practices in multiple areas, from crime scene investigation to assistance and protection, and noted a range of areas in which continued strong cooperation between ASEAN and the OPCW would be beneficial.
7. Following the presentations, I observed that national efforts, including the implementation of relevant legislation, remain pivotal. In addition, I noted the importance of coordinating research initiatives across regions to create awareness and share best practices essential to the fight against terrorism. I further highlighted that regional coordination has the potential to cultivate a culture of mutual responsibility for the safety of all involved, and consequently, a holistic approach should be considered in pursuing the fight against chemical terrorism.
8. Several observations and questions were put by participants on the topics of risk assessment and capacity building; areas of future region-to-region cooperation or information sharing, and the potential role of the OPCW in this regard; gaps that should be addressed in future activities; and possibilities for public-private partnership.
9. As I stated in my last report to the Council, I intended to explore how the OEWG-T could assist in the preparatory process for the Review Conference. To that end, a set of points for consideration were circulated to States Parties in advance and introduced by me at the meeting. The points encompass national implementation, threat and risk assessment, and partnerships. Delegations submitted responses and suggestions for further points for consideration in writing and orally at the meeting.
10. These inputs will help build the elements of a more detailed survey which I intend to have distributed in the coming weeks. Responses to this survey will, in turn, inform discussions at the next meeting of the OEWG-T, the outcomes of which will provide the basis of my presentation to the Open-Ended Working Group for the Preparation of the Fifth Review Conference, when it considers the issue of countering chemical terrorism at its ninth meeting on 15 November.
11. At the end of the meeting, under the item "Any other business", no further issues were raised by delegations.
12. I take this opportunity to express my profound appreciation to the delegates and to the presenters for their participation.
13. The next meeting of the OEWG-T is scheduled to take place prior to the 101st Session of the Council. The date of the meeting will be communicated closer to the time.
14. Thank you, Mr Chairperson.