



S/2147/2023

3 March 2023

ENGLISH and FRENCH only

**NOTE BY THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT**

**REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON ENFORCING EFFECTIVE CUSTOMS CONTROL  
OF THE TRADE IN TOXIC CHEMICALS IN AFRICA  
BRAZZAVILLE, THE CONGO  
2 – 4 MAY 2023**

1. On behalf of the Government of the Congo, the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter “the Secretariat”) wishes to invite senior representatives of National Authorities and of customs administrations to participate in a regional conference entitled “Enforcing Effective Customs Control of the Trade in Toxic Chemicals in Africa”. The regional conference will be held from 2 to 4 May 2023 in Brazzaville, the Congo. In addition to the State Party hosting the event, the regional conference is being organised in cooperation with the World Customs Organization.
2. This conference is primarily intended for customs officials responsible for the control of transfers that include chemicals, as well as for representatives of National Authorities that typically interact with customs administrations. States Parties and National Authorities are strongly encouraged to support and endorse applications or nominations of suitable female candidates for the event.
3. The conference aims to strengthen the capacity of African customs administrations and National Authorities to enforce effective control of the trade in chemicals by facilitating the sharing of good practices and identifying opportunities for improving prevailing practices and enhancing transnational cooperation. Specifically, the conference will provide an opportunity to:
  - (a) deepen participants’ understanding of the transfers regime of scheduled chemicals under the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter “the Convention”);
  - (b) enhance participants’ awareness of region-specific threats pertaining to the acquisition and use of chemical weapons by non-State actors and of related risks and vulnerabilities in connection with transborder trade in chemicals;
  - (c) exchange experiences and best practices related to the enforcement of the transfers regime and its effectiveness in addressing threats arising from non-State actors; and
  - (d) advance and enhance regional cooperation among customs administrations in relation to the implementation of the Convention.



4. The provisional programme for the conference is attached as the Annex to this Note. The conference will focus on, inter alia, the following topics:
  - (a) the Convention and its verification regime and the role of customs administrations in fulfilling national obligations under the Convention;
  - (b) the threat posed by non-State actors regarding the illicit transfer of toxic chemicals, as well the assessment and management of this threat;
  - (c) progress and challenges in implementing the transfers regimes of scheduled chemicals under the Convention; and
  - (d) regional, subregional, and national level cooperation between customs administrations and National Authorities.
5. Delegates may be invited to join panel discussions or deliver presentations on national experiences, challenges, and practices in controlling trade in toxic chemicals and managing related threats.
6. The conference will be conducted in English and French, with simultaneous interpretation provided in both languages.
7. The Secretariat will sponsor two delegates per State Party. For sponsored delegates, the Secretariat will cover the costs of travel, accommodation, meals, and medical insurance for the duration of the conference and will provide a limited subsistence allowance to cover sundry expenses. The Secretariat will not pay for medical assistance; delegates should therefore be fit to travel.
8. States Parties are encouraged to identify (preselect) and nominate eligible candidates using the established application procedures. Applications should be submitted online through Eventus—the OPCW event management system (<https://apps.opcw.org/eventus>)—before Friday, 17 March 2023. Applications must be reviewed and endorsed digitally in Eventus by the respective National Authority no later than Friday, 24 March 2023, to be followed by a final review by the Secretariat.
9. Additional information about the conference may be obtained from the Implementation Support Branch, International Cooperation and Assistance Division, of the OPCW. The contact persons are Solomon Abebe Haile (Tel: +31 (0)70 416 3428; Email: [solomon.haile@opcw.org](mailto:solomon.haile@opcw.org)) and Victor Barros Correia (Tel: +31 (0)70 416 3430; Email: [victor.barros-correia@opcw.org](mailto:victor.barros-correia@opcw.org)).

Annex: Provisional Programme

**Annex**

**REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON ENFORCING EFFECTIVE CUSTOMS CONTROL  
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2 – 4 MAY 2023**

**PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME**

	<b>Activity</b>
<b><i>Tuesday, 2 May 2023</i></b>	
	Registration
	Opening ceremony and group photograph
	Introduction and overview of the conference agenda
	The Chemical Weapons Convention and its verification regime
	The role of customs in fulfilling national obligations under the Convention
<b><i>Wednesday, 3 May 2023</i></b>	
	The regional threat landscape: non-State actors and the illicit transfer of toxic chemicals
	Threat assessment methodologies and tools and their application with regard to the transfers regime under the Convention
	Progress and challenges in implementing the transfers regime of scheduled chemicals – Part 1
<b><i>Thursday, 4 May 2023</i></b>	
	Progress and challenges in implementing the transfers regime of scheduled chemicals – Part 2
	Regional, subregional, and national level cooperation between customs administrations and National Authorities
	Outcome statement