

**REPORT BY AMBASSADOR ROBERT P. MIKULAK
FACILITATOR FOR CHEMICAL INDUSTRY AND OTHER ARTICLE VI ISSUES**

I am pleased to brief the Council on the activities of the industry cluster in the intersessional period since Seventy-Eighth Session of the Executive Council. The industry cluster met on 2 June, the first informal consultations under the Vice-Chairmanship for Chemical Industry and Other Article VI Issues of Ambassador Jong-hyun Choe of the Republic of Korea. I would like to thank Ambassador Choe for assuming this important role on the Council.

As this will be my last report to the Council as facilitator for Chemical Industry, I would also like to extend my thanks to Mr Rüdiger Zettel, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Germany, who will assume the role of facilitator going forward.

The consultations on 2 June addressed three topics. I defer discussion of one such topic, the Secure Information Exchange Project – or “SIX” – to Aladdin AlHmedawi, the facilitator for that issue.

Under the second topic, delegations heard a briefing by the Technical Secretariat about its system for certifying OPCW designated laboratories for off-site analysis. The Secretariat provided a review of its laboratory proficiency testing programme, both for environmental and biomedical analysis. The briefing highlighted the ongoing importance of the designated labs for analysing environmental samples associated with the continuing OPCW mission in Syria.

The Secretariat also explained its new initiative to introduce a Chemical Weapons Convention Chemical Analysis Competency Test (CFACT) to help build capacity at laboratories preparing for the proficiency test for environmental analysis certification. The Technical Secretariat received positive feedback about this initiative and announced that it will keep delegations informed as the laboratory continues rolling out the programme.

In the third topic discussed on 2 June, the Technical Secretariat gave a briefing on the details of its newly-introduced interim procedure for handling cases of Schedule 1 chemicals as unavoidable by-products. The Secretariat explained the purpose behind the procedure, and announced that it will apply the procedure as an interim policy, which started on 1 July, until the policy is superseded by a decision of the OPCW policy making organs. Delegations took the opportunity to ask questions of the Technical Secretariat and to provide a variety of feedback in what proved to be a useful exchange of views and technical considerations.



In closing I would like to thank the representatives of the Technical Secretariat for its commitment to providing information to delegations on these important topics.

I request that this report be considered as an official document of the Seventy-Ninth Session of the Executive Council.

Thank you.

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