



Verification Division
S/783/2009
6 August 2009
ENGLISH only

NOTE BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

**CHANGE OF DATE FOR CONFIDENCE-BUILDING EXERCISE
FOR ANALYSIS OF BIOMEDICAL SAMPLES**

1. In Note S/776/2009, dated 20 July, the Director-General informed Member States of the schedule and arrangements for a confidence-building exercise for the analysis of biomedical samples relevant to the investigation of incidents of alleged use of chemical weapons.
2. Several Member States have expressed concern over the timing of the exercise and have requested that additional time be allotted for their laboratories to prepare for the exercise.
3. As a result, the following changes in scheduling will be made:
 - (a) The exercise is being conducted with samples prepared by the Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research—TNO Defence, Security and Safety, Rijswijk, the Netherlands. Samples will be dispatched from TNO on or around **4 November 2009**. The test is scheduled so that laboratories that are participating in the 26th Official OPCW Proficiency Test can also participate in this exercise. The exercise is being coordinated with the assistance of Dr Robin Black from the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl), the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
 - (b) Laboratories are requested to submit analysis reports within **35** calendar days of receiving the sample. Reports will be evaluated by Dstl and TNO.
 - (c) States Parties should notify the OPCW Laboratory by **15 October 2009** of any laboratory nominated to take part. The notification should be made by fax or e-mail to the OPCW Laboratory and should include the name and address of the laboratory as well as the name, mailing address, fax number, and e-mail address of the laboratory contact person. The fax number of the OPCW Laboratory is +31(0) 15 284 0779, and the e-mail address for notification is proficiency@opcw.org. The OPCW Laboratory will provide more details on the nature of the test and the formatting requirements of the reports directly to each laboratory that is nominated, using the e-mail contact information provided with the nomination.



4. The purpose of the exercise is to begin building expertise in the analysis of biomedical samples relevant to the investigation of alleged use. The exercise is not intended to be a test of current laboratory proficiency, but rather a means for the various laboratories and the OPCW Technical Secretariat to examine the specific requirements for biomarker identification at trace levels.
5. The exercise will consist of a number of samples that the laboratory will be requested to identify and, if possible, determine the approximate concentration of a specified set of metabolic products of scheduled chemicals.
6. Approximately one month prior to sample dispatch, specific details of the reporting requirements and suggested analytical procedures will be distributed to all laboratories that are nominated. Laboratories are encouraged to use their own methods of analysis as well as those suggested and, where possible, to compare the results in their reports. Unlike the OPCW Proficiency Tests, technical assistance, either by telephone or e-mail, will be available during the exercise.
7. The results of this exercise will not affect any laboratory currently designated or seeking designation by the OPCW. Participation in this exercise does not replace the requirement of “one OPCW Proficiency Test per calendar year” needed to retain designation.

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