



Eighty-Ninth Session
9 – 12 October 2018

EC-89/DG.22
C-23/DG.12
20 September 2018
Original: ENGLISH

NOTE BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

**REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ADVISORY BOARD ON EDUCATION
AND OUTREACH COVERING THE PERIOD FROM
1 SEPTEMBER 2017 TO 31 AUGUST 2018**

1. Paragraph 18 of the Terms of Reference of the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach (ABEO), as adopted by the Conference of the States Parties (hereinafter “the Conference”) at its Twentieth Session (Annex to C-20/DEC.9, dated 3 December 2015), provides for the submission by the Director-General of an annual report to the Executive Council and to the Conference on the ABEO’s activities. This is the third such report, covering the activities of the ABEO from 1 September 2017 to 31 August 2018, including its Fifth and Sixth Sessions. The reports of those sessions (ABEO-5/2, dated 1 March 2018 and ABEO-6/1, dated 30 August 2018) serve as the basis for this report.
2. In accordance with its terms of reference, at its Fifth Session the Board re-appointed Dr Jean Pascal Zanders of Belgium as its Chairperson and appointed Dr Austin Alluoch of Kenya as its Vice-Chairperson.

Intersessional activities (September 2017 to February 2018)

3. During the intersessional period leading up to the Fifth Session of the Board, a drafting group of ABEO members worked to finalise the report on the role of education and outreach in preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons, requested by the Director-General. The report was submitted on time and subsequently published as an official-series document (ABEO-5/1, dated 12 February 2018).
4. Also during the intersessional period leading up to its Fifth Session, ABEO members conducted several relevant activities, on which they reported during the session (section 8 of ABEO-5/2).
5. In addition, the ABEO Chairperson gave a presentation to the Conference at its Twenty-Second Session on the Board’s work and its then pending report on the role of education and outreach in preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons (ABEO-5/1).



Fifth Session of the Board

6. The ABEO's Fifth Session, for which the Secretariat provided its customary assistance to the Board, took place over three days, from 27 February to 1 March 2018.
7. In opening the Fifth Session, the Director-General noted that the Board's report (ABEO-5/1) presented a solid basis for ongoing engagement with States Parties and other stakeholders. He encouraged the Board to continue using opportunities to make its voice heard. The Director-General also requested the Board to focus its intersessional efforts on converting relevant parts of its report (ABEO-5/1) into a user-friendly brochure for States Parties' use in their education and outreach activities.
8. During its Fifth Session, the ABEO received an update on the most important developments in the work of the Organisation since the Board's previous session in October 2017, addressing, inter alia, preparations for the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter "the Fourth Review Conference"), the ongoing work of the Scientific Advisory Board, and the work undertaken by the Open-Ended Working Group on the Future Priorities of the OPCW. During the last day of the session, the Board provided a briefing to States Parties on its work.
9. Also during its Fifth Session, the ABEO was briefed on the call for nominations for ABEO membership for the period from 2019 to 2021 (S/1574/2018, dated 31 January 2018). It was noted that current members interested in serving a second, consecutive, term should engage with their National Authorities to seek nomination before the stated deadline.

Intersessional activities (March to August 2018)

10. During the intersessional period between its Fifth and Sixth Sessions, the ABEO worked through a coordination group to prepare a first draft of the brochure requested by the Director-General. This draft text was circulated to all Board members shortly before the Sixth Session, in order to facilitate discussion during the session.
11. Also during the intersessional period leading up to its Sixth Session, ABEO members conducted several relevant activities, on which they reported during the Board's session (section 5 of ABEO-6/1).
12. In addition, on 30 May the ABEO Chairperson gave a presentation on the Board's work and its recent report on the role of education and outreach in preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons to the Open-Ended Working Group for the Preparation of the Fourth Review Conference.

Sixth Session of the Board

13. The ABEO's Sixth Session took place from 28 to 30 August 2018 and focused mainly on the brochure requested by the Director-General during the Board's Fifth Session.

14. The Director-General opened the Board's Sixth Session, emphasising the importance of the timely completion of the Board's work on the brochure, and encouraged the Board to produce more such practical tools, with a view to supporting the Organisation's education and outreach activities. The Director-General also noted that nominations for the Board from 2019 onward were under review and that a decision would be taken in the autumn.
15. At its Sixth Session, the Board received the by now customary briefing by the Secretariat on notable developments at the OPCW, including the Fourth Special Session of the Conference, and the report of the Scientific Advisory Board submitted to the Director-General for the Fourth Review Conference. The Board furthermore received updates from its members on their intersessional activities. During the last day of its session, the Board provided a briefing to States Parties on its work.
16. The ABEO devoted much of its Sixth Session to discussion of the draft brochure produced by the coordination group. This benefitted from additional input from members of the Secretariat who are regularly involved in producing engaging education and outreach materials, such as in the science and technology context.

Conclusions

17. The ABEO plans to meet again in February 2019 for its Seventh Session. During the intersessional period, the Board will focus on finalising the requested brochure in time for the Twenty-Third Session of the Conference. The Director-General looks forward to seeing the results of that work, which will assist States Parties in engaging relevant stakeholders.
18. Since its establishment, the ABEO's work has evolved significantly: while during its first year of operation the Board had to establish its practices and procedures and arrive at common understandings on the scope of its work, the second year saw the emergence of a more conceptual focus, linked to the request by the Director-General for a substantive report by the end of 2017. The ABEO's third year of operation, 2018, has seen the transition of its work toward the Board developing more practical tools for the Organisation and States Parties to use in their engagement activities. The Director-General expects such practical tools to remain the focus of ABEO activities from 2019 onward.
19. The Director-General thanks all ABEO members for their commitment to the Board and for their contributions, both collectively and in an individual capacity, during the Board's initial three years of operation.