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**NOTE BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL****REPORT ON PROPOSALS AND OPTIONS PURSUANT TO PARAGRAPH 21  
OF DECISION C-SS-4/DEC.3 (DATED 27 JUNE 2018) ON ADDRESSING THE  
THREAT FROM CHEMICAL WEAPONS USE**

1. The Conference of the States Parties (hereinafter “the Conference”) at its Fourth Special Session adopted a decision entitled “Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use” (C-SS-4/DEC.3, dated 27 June 2018). In paragraph 21 of the decision, the Conference invited the Director-General “to submit to the Conference at its next regular session:
  - (a) proposals to enhance the capacity and tools of the Secretariat to strengthen implementation of the Convention verification regime;
  - (b) options for further assistance the Secretariat may provide to States Parties to enable them to implement their obligations under the Convention, to enhance chemical security, and to enable international cooperation in the field of chemical activities for purposes not prohibited under the Convention; and
  - (c) other proposals to strengthen the capability of the Secretariat”.
2. In paragraph 22 of the decision, the Conference invited further the Director-General “to produce a report, on the options and proposals set out in paragraph 21, for the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention”.
3. Accordingly, the Director-General submits to the States Parties the proposals and options contained in this Note. The Note draws on several sources in formulating the proposals and options set out below. Those sources include recommendations made by the Scientific Advisory Board, including through the report of its Temporary Working Group on Verification (SAB/REP/1/15) and its report to 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”) (RC-4/DG.1, dated 30 April 2018); the recommendations of the Open-Ended Working Group on Future Priorities of the OPCW to the Fourth Review Conference (RC-4/WP.1, dated 16 July 2018); the Note by the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter “the Secretariat”) entitled “The OPCW in 2025: Ensuring a World Free of Chemical Weapons” (S/1252/2015, dated 6 March 2015); and the Note by the Secretariat entitled “Medium-Term Plan of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical



Weapons 2017–2021” (EC-83/S/1 C-21/S/1, dated 8 April 2016). Previous proposals, such as those set out in the report of the Advisory Panel on Future Priorities of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (S/951/2011, dated 25 July 2011), have also been considered.

**SUBPARAGRAPH 21(A): STRENGTHENING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VERIFICATION REGIME**

4. The following proposals relate to the capacity and tools required to strengthen implementation of the verification functions assigned to the Secretariat by the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter “the Convention”), grouped into four key areas:
  - (a) sampling and analysis;
  - (b) information collection and management;
  - (c) inspection procedures; and
  - (d) assistance to new States Parties.

**Ensuring that the Secretariat’s sampling and analysis capabilities meet future requirements**

5. The Secretariat envisages that the successful completion of the project to upgrade the OPCW Laboratory and Equipment Store to a Centre for Chemistry and Technology will be a key step in ensuring that the Secretariat possesses the right scientific tools and capabilities to strengthen implementation of the Convention verification regime in future, and thus sees the project as a central proposal in response to subparagraph 21(a) of the decision. Details on the project are set out in the Note by the Secretariat entitled “Needs Statement for Upgrading the OPCW Chemical Laboratory to a Centre for Chemistry and Technology” (S/1564/2017, dated 22 December 2017 and Corr.1, dated 3 January 2018).
6. Pending the completion of the upgrade project, certain specific laboratory tools and capabilities would further contribute to the sampling and analysis capabilities that are required in the performance of its functions and to the decision’s goal of addressing the threat from chemical weapons use. The Secretariat therefore proposes to begin the process of evaluating the next generation of gas chromatograph-mass spectrometers, to acquire or develop a computational method for the prediction of the toxic and physical properties of chemicals, to acquire a Laboratory Information Management System, to begin carrying out research and development on enabling tools for field diagnostics and analysis, and to create a Secretariat Interdivisional Innovation Group to direct research on, evaluate, and field test new technologies for use in verification activities.

**Capturing and managing information for improved verification**

7. The Secretariat proposes to build on recent improvements in managing verification-related information through two key initiatives, namely, expanding the

Secretariat's use of open-source information to support a closer focus on threats to the object and purpose of the Convention in the implementation of its verification mandate, and further upgrading the Secretariat's policies and systems to ensure a unified approach to information management.

8. The Secretariat proposes to augment its use of open-source information to, in particular, improve the Secretariat's readiness to assist States Parties with the implementation of the Convention's declarations requirements; enhance site-selection procedures; aid in resolving transfer discrepancies; and assist in the process of clarifying, with respect to potential future possessor States Parties, the completeness and accuracy of declarations submitted under Article III of the Convention.
9. In this context, the Secretariat also intends to augment its situational awareness through increasing the capabilities of the existing Situation Centre to allow it to gather and analyse relevant information regarding instances of actual or potential chemical weapons use globally, and to provide operational support to all Secretariat personnel on mission.
10. The Secretariat also requires strengthened policies and further investment in data analysis and information-management capabilities. In particular, the Secretariat intends to establish a single function in the Organisation responsible for information management and overseeing and implementing further infrastructural investment in a unified manner.

#### **Improving inspection procedures to take into account contemporary risks**

11. The Secretariat assesses that certain adjustments could be made to inspection procedures and policies to ensure that inspections are more attuned to potential threats to the object and purpose of the Convention and that the Secretariat's verification responsibilities continue to be carried out in the most cost-effective manner. The Secretariat proposes to work towards adjusting the site selection algorithm to ensure a greater relevance of the sites selected for inspection to the object and purpose of the Convention; adjusting inspection aims to verify the absence of prohibited activities; rendering inspection reports more concise and relevant to threats to the object and purpose of the Convention; and expanding the use of the Secure Information Exchange system to enable a secure link for communications between inspection teams and Headquarters.

#### **Dealing with the possibility of new possessor States Parties**

12. The Secretariat must maintain its readiness for the accession to the Convention by new States Parties that may declare the possession of chemical weapons. In light of experiences gained over the last several years, and to prepare for such an eventuality, the Secretariat intends to establish an interdivisional group tasked with developing proposals to enhance the capacity and tools of the Secretariat to implement any decision taken by the Executive Council pursuant to paragraph 8 of Article IV and paragraph 10 of Article V of the Convention. The group would also propose measures to assist such States Parties more effectively in meeting their declaration and destruction obligations under the Convention.

**SUBPARAGRAPH 21(B): PROVIDING FURTHER ASSISTANCE TO STATES PARTIES**

13. Mindful of emerging threats to the object and purpose of the Convention posed by the use or threat of use of chemical weapons (including toxic chemicals as weapons), the Secretariat proposes that its capacity-building and international cooperation programmes respond to States Parties' needs in the most effective manner possible; develop States Parties' ownership of the capacity-building programmes in which they participate by aligning programmes with States Parties' objectives, priorities, and security concerns; and assist States Parties, when requested, in performing threat and risk assessments.
14. Further supporting States Parties to build their national technical and scientific capabilities is a key component of the project to transform the OPCW Laboratory and Equipment Store into a Centre for Chemistry and Technology. The project is therefore also an important response to the request contained in subparagraph 21(b) of the decision. This project's goal is for the Centre for Chemistry and Technology to become an international centre of excellence. It will be a hub for the exchange of information and best practices among States Parties on the scientific aspects of their implementation of the Convention and will provide essential training and other technical support to States Parties wishing to develop analytical expertise, particularly those aspiring to join the network of OPCW designated laboratories. The international scientific community will be able to rely on the Centre to provide opportunities for post-graduate students to take part in Convention-related research activities and projects. In this vein, a separate trust fund could be created to support, through the allocation of grants, participation in these activities by students from developing countries.
15. The Secretariat further proposes the following adjustments to its capacity-building and international cooperation programmes:
  - (a) a greater emphasis, in its education and outreach and in its capacity-building assistance programmes, on the Convention's role in countering contemporary chemical threats including chemical terrorism;
  - (b) increased involvement of the full range of national stakeholders, across the entire chemical life-cycle, in capacity-building programmes; and
  - (c) the development of further technical tools and programmes to assist States Parties in their national implementation efforts, including:
    - (i) national implementation assessment support, including a self-assessment tool and an OPCW advisory service, on request, consisting of an OPCW-led team of experts deployed to assist in carrying out national implementation assessments;
    - (ii) the establishment of a series of non-binding, voluntary OPCW guidelines and technical documents to support States Parties on key aspects of treaty implementation;

- (iii) the development or expansion of capacity-building programmes that directly increase chemical supply-chain security;
  - (iv) the development of training in incident command, interagency coordination, and sampling and other evidence collection;
  - (v) the development of a best-practice external classification system, similar in design to the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group system employed by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, to support States Parties in developing national chemical incident response teams; and
  - (vi) the expansion of laboratory capacity-building to support those national laboratories working with police or other entities in the conduct of CBRN-related investigations, in order to assist States Parties in the identification and prosecution of perpetrators of chemical attacks.
16. The Secretariat further proposes to strengthen its links with other international organisations, non-governmental organisations and industry in the delivery of its capacity-building programmes. This step would assist in ensuring that the OPCW's capacity-building interventions, at the national level, are received in a coherent context and benefit the full range of relevant national agencies.

**SUBPARAGRAPH 21(C): OTHER PROPOSALS TO STRENGTHEN THE CAPABILITY OF THE SECRETARIAT**

17. The ability of the Secretariat to execute its mandate depends in large measure on the resources available to it. Human resources are key in this regard. In his Note entitled "Report on the Impact of the OPCW Policy on Tenure" (EC-89/DG.28, dated 2 October 2018), the Director-General presented an independent report on the impact of the OPCW policy on tenure. He also noted that there is an imperative for stabilisation of the implementation of the tenure policy that meets the requirements for the continued future operational effectiveness of the Secretariat and requested that due consideration be given to the contents of the report.
18. The Secretariat also proposes that further provision be made for business continuity and disaster recovery capability, as a capability critical to ensuring the functioning of the Secretariat in all circumstances. The OPCW Centre for Chemistry and Technology project will be designed to take these requirements into account.
19. In light of the increasing threat of chemical weapons use, the Secretariat further proposes the continued strengthening of its emergency deployment capabilities, particularly those related to the Rapid Response and Assistance Mission, the Assistance and Coordination Team, and Investigations of Alleged Use. The Organisation chairs a working group of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force and is currently leading a project aimed at enhancing the interoperability of international organisations likely to be involved in the response to a chemical and/or biological incident.

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20. The Director-General intends to develop the proposals contained in this Note and submit them to States Parties for further discussion in due course.

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