

**REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL****PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISION C-SS-4/DEC.3
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 24 of the decision, the Conference decided that “the Director-General shall provide a copy of this decision and a report on its initial implementation to all States Parties and to the United Nations Secretary-General within 30 days of this decision and thereafter provide a report on progress to each regular session of the Council”, in reference to the Executive Council (hereinafter “the Council”).
2. In furtherance of paragraph 7 of the decision, the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter “the Secretariat”) has continued its engagement with the Syrian Arab Republic to clarify all gaps, discrepancies, and inconsistencies noted in its initial declaration and subsequent submissions. Following a meeting between representatives of the Secretariat and the Syrian Arab Republic held in Beirut between 4 and 8 February 2019 to review the implementation of various activities, including those related to the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), it was agreed that a technical meeting will be held in March 2019 at OPCW Headquarters. All of the declaration-related issues reported by the DAT will be addressed in this meeting, with the objective of agreeing upon a plan of activities. The Secretariat will continue to update States Parties on the activities of the DAT through existing reporting modalities.
3. Consistent with paragraph 8 of the decision, and following current practice, the Secretariat continues to update States Parties on the operations of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria (FFM) through the monthly progress report entitled “Progress in the Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme”, and through reports detailing the FFM’s activities and findings regarding specific incidents of alleged use of chemicals as a weapon in the Syrian Arab Republic. In addition, the Secretariat will provide briefings on the activities and findings of the FFM to States Parties, as appropriate.
4. The Secretariat will provide additional updates on the activities of the DAT and FFM as part of its briefings to States Parties on all chemical weapons-related activities in the Syrian Arab Republic in advance of each of the Council’s regular sessions.
5. Pursuant to paragraph 10 of C-SS-4/DEC.3, the Secretariat is establishing the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT). The IIT will be responsible for



identifying the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic by identifying and reporting on all information potentially relevant to the origin of those chemical weapons in those instances in which the FFM determines or has determined that use or likely use occurred, and cases for which the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism has not issued a report.

6. In this context, at its Twenty-Third Session, the Conference adopted the Programme and Budget of the OPCW for 2019 (C-23/DEC.10, dated 20 November 2018), which takes into account the resource requirements for implementing paragraph 10 of C-SS-4/DEC.3.
7. The IIT is expected to receive significant support for its activities from other relevant Secretariat units, with initial support currently being provided by the Inspectorate and the Verification Divisions. The IIT reports directly to the Director-General. Upon approval of the budget for 2019, the Secretariat immediately initiated recruitment to fill the new positions established for the team; this process is ongoing.
8. Further resource requirements for 2019 of approximately EUR 1.3 million for the implementation of paragraph 10 of C-SS-4/DEC.3 are to be met through voluntary contributions. These include costs for furniture and equipment, travel, consultancy and contractual services required for interpretation and translation, information technology (IT), analytical services, and recruitment. To date, approximately EUR 404,000 has been contributed or pledged for this specific purpose. Contributions and pledges have been received from Denmark, Norway, Slovenia, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
9. As laid out in paragraph 12 of C-SS-4/DEC.3, the Secretariat is working to put in place appropriate measures to preserve and provide information to the body established by the United Nations General Assembly in resolution 71/248 (2016), as well as to any relevant investigatory entities established under the auspices of the United Nations. In this regard, the Secretariat has signed a memorandum of understanding with the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011 (IIIM) regarding the sharing of information with this body. Consultations between the Secretariat and the IIIM are ongoing with regard to the implementation of this arrangement.
10. To ensure its ability to preserve and provide information to the IIIM, the Secretariat requires additional IT infrastructure and capabilities. Accordingly, at its Twenty-Third Session, the Conference adopted a decision entitled "Cash Surplus for 2016" (C-23/DEC.11, dated 20 November 2018), in which it approved the use of a portion of the 2016 cash surplus to meet these additional IT needs.
11. In accordance with paragraph 18 of C-SS-4/DEC.3, the Secretariat is developing options for further assistance to States Parties to help prevent the chemical weapons threat posed by non-State actors, and to aid States Parties' contingency planning in the event of a chemical weapons attack. The Secretariat is reviewing and will build on existing activities in this regard, including with respect to preparedness, prevention, and response, taking into consideration, inter alia, the decision of the Council entitled

“Addressing the Threat Posed by the Use of Chemical Weapons by Non-State Actors” (EC-86/DEC.9, dated 13 October 2017).

12. Pursuant to paragraph 20 of C-SS-4/DEC.3, the Director-General, if requested by a State Party investigating possible chemical weapons use on its territory, can provide technical expertise to identify those who were perpetrators, organisers, sponsors, or otherwise involved in the use of chemicals as weapons.
13. The Director-General submitted a Note to the Conference at its Twenty-Third Session entitled “Report Pursuant to Paragraph 20 of Decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 (dated 27 June 2018) on Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use” (C-23/DG.17, dated 15 November 2018). This report, in part, outlines the Secretariat’s plan to establish the capability to respond to requests for assistance under paragraph 20 of C-SS-4/DEC.3.
14. The Secretariat intends to achieve this objective, primarily, by implementing a series of capacity-building measures that will seek to expand the existing skills of relevant Secretariat staff. The Secretariat is currently developing a detailed plan for these activities, which will start being implemented in 2019 and will include, inter alia:
 - (a) training to further build investigative capabilities in areas such as crime scene management, witness interviews, evidence collection, and forensics;
 - (b) the procurement of relevant software and equipment; and
 - (c) the revision of job descriptions to include skills and expertise that generally are not available within the Secretariat and that may be applicable to activities under paragraph 20 of C-SS-4/DEC.3.
15. The Secretariat’s goal in planning these capacity-building measures will be to have a basic capability to provide technical expertise to investigations under paragraph 20 of C-SS-4/DEC.3 before the end of the anticipated period during which the IIT will be operational. During the period of the IIT’s operations, the Secretariat will seek to benefit from its presence should a request be submitted under paragraph 20. The team will also contribute to the establishment of a sustainable paragraph 20 capability by engaging in the transfer of knowledge to relevant Secretariat staff to increase their investigative skills and expertise. These knowledge management-related activities will complement the aforementioned capacity-building efforts.
16. Also pursuant to paragraph 20 of C-SS-4/DEC.3, and as an additional component of Note C-23/DG.17, the Director-General submitted to the Conference specific proposals to establish independent, impartial, expert arrangements for enlisting support, as appropriate, from outside experts with relevant qualifications and professional experience who could potentially support the Secretariat’s response to a request for assistance from a State Party investigating the possible use of chemical weapons on its territory.
17. Pursuant to paragraph 21 of C-SS-4/DEC.3, the Director-General also submitted to the Conference at its Twenty-Third Session proposals to strengthen the implementation of the verification regime of the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter “the Convention”), to provide further assistance to States Parties to enable

them to implement their obligations under the Convention, to enhance chemical security, to enable international cooperation in the field of chemical activities for purposes not prohibited under the Convention, and to further strengthen the capabilities of the Secretariat. These proposals were presented in a Note entitled “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” (C-23/DG.16 RC-4/DG.4, dated 15 November 2018).

18. In accordance with paragraph 22 of C-SS-4/DEC.3, the Director-General additionally submitted this Note to the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.
19. In furtherance of paragraph 23 of C-SS-4/DEC.3, the Secretariat will continue to prioritise the realisation of the universality of the Convention, on the understanding that this goal is essential to achieving its object and purpose, to enhancing the security of States Parties, and to international peace and security. The Director-General continues to call upon all States Parties to support the Secretariat’s efforts in this regard.
20. In accordance with paragraph 24 of C-SS-4/DEC.3, the Director-General will continue to provide a report on progress in the implementation of the decision to the Council at each regular session.

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