OPCW

NOTE BY THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT

**ELECTRONIC SUBMISSIONS OF ANNUAL DECLARATIONS
ON PAST ACTIVITIES AS AT 31 MAY 2019**

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1.   The Declarations Handbook provides guidance for the preparation and submission of declarations by States Parties to the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter "the Secretariat"), including the submission of electronic declarations.[1] This helps improve both the quality of declaration data and the efficiency of processing such data in the Secretariat's Verification Information System (VIS).

2.   The electronic declarations tool for National Authorities (EDNA) was developed by the Secretariat and initially released in 2008 for use by States Parties for the preparation of Article VI declarations. The most current version (3.3.1) has been available since January 2018.

3.   This Note presents an update on the overview of the status of submission of annual declarations on past activities (ADPA) in electronic format, information that was first provided in a Note by the Secretariat in 2009 (S/773/2009, dated 18 June 2009).

DECLARATIONS RECEIVED IN ELECTRONIC FORMAT

4.   As at 31 May 2019, an ADPA for 2018 had been submitted by 97 States Parties, including eight nil declarations. Of the 89 declarations that therefore are required to be processed, 53 declarations (55%) were submitted, fully or partially, in electronic format.[2] Forty-eight of these were prepared using EDNA. In total, 96% of plant sites and facilities were declared in electronic format.

5.   As at 31 May 2019, 26 Schedule 1 facilities had been declared in ADPA for 2018, by 23 States Parties. Of these 23 declarations, 13 (57%) were submitted in electronic format, 12 of which were prepared using EDNA. Of the total 26 declared Schedule 1 facilities, 14 (54%) were declared electronically.

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[1]   The Declarations Handbook 2013, Section A, paragraph 3.3.

[2]   Only declarations that include electronic XML files are counted as electronic declarations.

PROCESSING ELECTRONIC DECLARATIONS

6.   The Secretariat has worked with the States Parties concerned to resolve any technical problems that they have encountered when submitting electronic declarations. While some technical problems can be resolved by the Secretariat, continued successful implementation of electronic declarations also depends on States Parties closely following the relevant protocols and guidelines that have been issued by the Secretariat.[3]

7.   Some States Parties that submit an electronic declaration also submit a hard copy declaration as the "authoritative" version. This requires that the Secretariat validate the consistency between both versions. As developments with electronic declarations continue, it is recommended that, whenever possible, States Parties consider making their formal submissions in electronic format, thus removing the need for a hard copy.

SUMMARY AND PERSPECTIVE

8.   The continual improvement of EDNA, combined with support and training, has led to an increase in the number of States Parties submitting declarations in electronic format and the overall percentage of data declared electronically.

9.   In 2018, the Secretariat decided to discontinue enhancing EDNA. Instead, a new Electronic Declarations Information System (EDIS) has been developed and will be available from August 2019. EDIS will include the major features requested by States Parties that were not implementable in EDNA. A release note including all the details related to EDIS will be shared with States Parties in due course.

10.   The Secretariat welcomes the continued use of electronic tools for the submission of declarations, and encourages States Parties to adopt the new system, which will allow for an easier, better, and more comprehensive, efficient, and effective preparation of declarations electronically. For any questions regarding EDNA and electronic declarations, States Parties are advised to contact the Data Analytics, Reporting and Quality Control Section of the Declarations Branch via its dedicated email address (vis@opcw.org).

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[3]   Available on the OPCW external server (https://external.opcw.org/) under EDNA documents.