

**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. In the framework of the Structured Dialogue agreed between the Secretariat and the Syrian Arab Republic on all chemical weapons-related issues, the twentieth and twenty-first rounds of consultations between the Syrian Arab Republic and the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) took place, respectively, from 18 to 21 March 2019 in The Hague, and from 10 to 17 April 2019 in Damascus.
3. During the twentieth round of consultations, all outstanding issues were discussed and re-grouped, with a view to developing a plan of future activities aimed at further clarifying these issues. The DAT subsequently deployed to the Syrian Arab Republic between 10 and 17 April 2019 for the twenty-first round of consultations.
4. During this visit, the DAT held a number of technical meetings with the Syrian National Authority, conducted one interview, and also conducted field visits to five sites from which it collected a total of 33 samples for analysis by OPCW designated laboratories. In the course of one of the field visits, the DAT noted the absence of remnants of destroyed production equipment and chemical munitions that the Syrian Arab Republic and DAT had agreed in 2015 to preserve at their original locations, to keep them available for activities aiming to help clarify gaps, discrepancies, and inconsistencies in the Syrian Arab Republic’s initial declaration and subsequent submissions.
5. During a visit to a previously declared chemical weapons production facility, the DAT also observed the presence of several undestroyed cylinders. The DAT requested the Syrian Arab Republic to retain these items untouched at their current



location until further notice. The Secretariat will continue to update States Parties on the activities of the DAT through existing reporting modalities.

6. 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.
7. On 1 March 2019, the Secretariat issued its final report on the incident that took place in Douma, Syrian Arab Republic, on 7 April 2018. Entitled “Report of the Fact-Finding Mission Regarding the Incident of Alleged Use of Toxic Chemicals as a Weapon in Douma, Syrian Arab Republic, on 7 April 2018” (S/1731/2019, dated 1 March 2019), the report concluded that the evaluation and analysis of all the information gathered by the FFM provide reasonable grounds that the use of a toxic chemical as a weapon took place in this incident. The report further concluded that this toxic chemical contained reactive chlorine, and that the toxic chemical was likely molecular chlorine. The Secretariat provided States Parties with a briefing on this report on 5 March 2019.
8. Pursuant to paragraph 10 of C-SS-4/DEC.3, the Secretariat has established the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) and initiated its work to identify 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 (JIM) has not issued a report.
9. Since early April 2014, there have been 39 separate incidents for which the FFM has determined that use or likely use of a chemical weapon occurred in the Syrian Arab Republic, including the aforementioned incident in Douma. The JIM issued findings attributing responsibility for six of these incidents in its reports. The IIT is currently reviewing the remaining incidents to finalise a plan for its investigations, and it aims to report on some of the incidents under review by the end of 2019.
10. The second round of high-level consultations to continue the Structured Dialogue between the Secretariat and the Syrian Arab Republic on all chemical weapons-related issues was initially planned to take place in Damascus from 8 to 10 May 2019. In response to a note verbale from the Secretariat that proposed participants and an agenda for the meeting, which included the Coordinator of the IIT and issues related to the IIT, on 23 April 2019, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic, Mr Faisal Mekdad, sent a letter to the Director-General that reiterated the Syrian Arab Republic’s refusal to recognise decision C-SS-4/DEC.3. The note verbale further stated that the Syrian Arab Republic refused to accept any of the implications and effects of the decision, and that as a consequence of its position, the Syrian Arab Republic would not issue a visa to the Coordinator of the IIT to visit Damascus.

11. On 9 May 2019, the Director-General sent a letter to Deputy Minister Mekdad that recalled that all States Parties and the Secretariat have an obligation to implement decisions adopted by the Conference, and that invited the Syrian Arab Republic to reconsider its position regarding decision C-SS-4/DEC.3. In the letter, the Director-General also communicated his decision to postpone the second round of consultations under the Structured Dialogue, and invited a delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic to The Hague for further consultations on this issue.
12. To date, approximately EUR 1.2 million in voluntary funds has been contributed or pledged to support the IIT's activities in 2019. As the Programme and Budget of the OPCW for 2019 (C-23/DEC.10, dated 20 November 2018) identified voluntary funding requirements of EUR 1.3 million for the IIT, a further EUR 0.1 million is still required. Contributions and pledges have been received from Australia, Canada, Denmark, New Zealand, Norway, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the European Union.
13. In continuation of its regular briefings to States Parties on chemical weapons-related activities in the Syrian Arab Republic and progress in the Structured Dialogue, on 28 May 2019, the Secretariat briefed States Parties on the activities of the DAT, FFM, and IIT, as well as on the biannual inspections of the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the Scientific Studies and Research Centre. The Secretariat will continue to keep States Parties informed of activities and progress with regard to the Syrian chemical weapons programme through briefings and existing reporting modalities.
14. 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.
15. 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. 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), the Secretariat is building on existing activities related to preparedness, prevention, and response.
16. Since the adoption of decision C-SS-4/DEC.3, the Secretariat has conducted two pilot workshops to raise awareness among stakeholders of how national legislation for implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter "the Convention") can contribute to addressing non-State actor threats involving toxic chemicals. The workshops took place in Abuja, Nigeria, from 16 to 18 October 2018, and in Kuala

Lumpur, Malaysia, from 9 to 11 April 2019. They were attended by representatives of States Parties from these regions and by a number of international and regional organisations.

17. 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.
18. 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 efforts to establish the capability to respond to requests for assistance under paragraph 20 of C-SS-4/DEC.3.
19. The Secretariat intends to achieve this objective, primarily, by implementing a series of capacity-building measures to expand the existing skills of relevant Secretariat staff. These measures 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.
20. The Secretariat’s goal in planning these capacity-building measures will be to have a core 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 IIT will engage 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.
21. 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.
22. 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 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).

23. 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.
24. 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.
25. 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 this decision to the Council at each regular session.

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