



**OPENING STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL
TO THE NINETY-FIRST SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
(FULL VERSION)**

Mr Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

1. I warmly welcome all delegations to the Ninety-First Session of the Executive Council. It gives me great pleasure to welcome in particular the new Chairperson of the Council, Ambassador Andrea Perugini, Permanent Representative of Italy to the OPCW. I am confident that, with his experience and diplomatic skills, the work of the Council will be fruitful and productive.
2. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to the outgoing Chairperson, Ambassador Jana Reinišová, Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic. She led the Council ably, providing effective guidance at crucial moments.
3. In terms of the range of activities carried out during the intersessional period, let me begin this statement with destruction-related activities. Overall, 97.08% of declared chemical weapons had been verified as destroyed as at 30 June 2019.
4. In the United States of America, construction of the main plant at the Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (BGCAPP) site is complete. In April, the Secretariat conducted the final engineering review of the Static Detonation Chamber (SDC).
5. From 6 to 11 April 2019, members of the Council, State Party representatives and Secretariat staff members visited the Pueblo facility, pursuant to decision C-16/DEC.11 (dated 1 December 2011). A report by the Chairperson of the Executive Council, EC-91/2, was published on 14 June 2019.
6. This facility is now operational. The first detonation took place on 7 June 2019.
7. China and Japan have continued to make progress on the excavation, recovery, and destruction of abandoned chemical weapons (ACWs) at various sites in China. As at 31 May 2019, around 76,300 items of ACWs had been recovered, of which approximately 53,500 ACWs have been verified by the Secretariat as having been destroyed.



8. At the Haerbaling site, the Secretariat carried out follow-up inspections of destruction operations and verified the destruction of 15,010 ACW items. A further estimated 330,000 ACW items are awaiting recovery and destruction.
9. In April, the Secretariat conducted an initial visit to the Harbin mobile destruction facility. Destruction operations began on 7 May 2019. In September, members of the Council, State Party representatives and Secretariat staff members will visit the Haerbaling site. I had the opportunity to visit it two years ago, in my previous capacity. Activities at this site illustrate the importance of a very good cooperation between States Parties in the interest of the implementation of the goals of the Convention.
10. The clean-up of the former chemical weapons site in Ruwagha, Libya, continues. The Secretariat, in collaboration with the Libyan National Authority, is overseeing a project to rinse, treat, and destroy Category 2 chemical material tanks and 350 metric tonnes (MT) of highly acidic effluent. I thank Cyprus, Finland, New Zealand, Spain, Tunisia, and the European Union, for their generous support to this project.
11. Turning to our work in relation to the Syrian Arab Republic, the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) has continued its work with regard to allegations of the use of chemical weapons on the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic. The Secretariat has also provided a response to the questions submitted in writing by the Syrian Arab Republic and the Russian Federation regarding the final Douma report through the Note entitled "Update on the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria" (S/1755/2019, dated 21 May 2019).
12. The Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) has also continued working to clarify gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies arising from Syria's initial declaration of chemical weapons and subsequent submissions. In this regard, two rounds of consultations between the Secretariat and the Syrian Arab Republic have taken place during the reporting period.
13. The twentieth round of consultations took place in The Hague from 18 to 21 March 2019, during which outstanding issues were discussed and a plan of action was developed.
14. The DAT subsequently deployed to the Syrian Arab Republic between 10 and 17 April 2019 for the twenty-first round of consultations. It held a number of technical meetings with the Syrian National Authority. It conducted one interview, and also conducted field visits to five sites, where it collected a total of 33 samples for analysis by OPCW designated laboratories.
15. A report of the DAT's work and findings has been made available to the Council (EC-91/HP/DG.2, dated 1 July 2019), as well as an unclassified summary (EC-91/DG.23, dated 5 July 2019).
16. In line with Executive Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, adopted on 11 November 2016, the Secretariat conducted the third and fourth rounds of inspections at the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC). The results of analysis of samples taken during these inspections were completed and shared with the Syrian Arab Republic. According to

the analysis of two designated laboratories, a chemical detected in one of the samples taken at Barzah during the third round of inspections could be the primary hydrolysis product of a Schedule 1 chemical. During the fourth round of inspections, there were no indications of any activities that were inconsistent with the obligations of the Syrian Arab Republic. The results of the third and fourth rounds of inspections will be reported to the Council at this session in the document entitled “Status of Implementation of Executive Council Decision EC-83/DEC.5 (dated 11 November 2016)” (EC-91/DG.17, dated 26 June 2019).

17. The Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) is now fully operational. A preliminary list of incidents for investigation has been established, and contact with Member States and with international, regional, and local actors is being sought. The IIT aims to collect all available information necessary for the fulfilment of its mandate. An overview of the IIT’s current and forecasted work is provided at this session of the Council in a Note entitled “Work of the Investigation and Identification Team Established by Decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 (dated 27 June 2018)” (EC-91/S/3, dated 28 June 2019).
18. The team’s composition reflects due regard for geographical and gender balance. Personnel in, and supporting, the IIT come from all regional groups and the team is composed of 50% men and 50% women.
19. The Secretariat continues to seek substantive engagement with representatives of the Syrian Arab Republic on all issues through the agreed Structured Dialogue. Within this framework, the Secretariat proposed an agenda and list of participants for a second round of high-level consultations to take place in Damascus from 8 to 10 May 2019. In order to advance the work of the consultations, it was proposed that the Coordinator of the IIT be included. In response, through a note verbale, the Syrian Arab Republic reiterated its position that it does not recognise the decision that underpins the IIT’s work, namely, the decision entitled “Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use” (C-SS-4/DEC.3, dated 27 June 2018), adopted by the Conference of the States Parties at its Fourth Special Session. The note verbale stated that, consequently, the Syrian Arab Republic would not issue a visa to the Coordinator of the IIT to visit Damascus.
20. On 9 May 2019, I sent a letter to the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic, Mr Faisal Mekdad, inviting the Syrian Arab Republic to reconsider its position. I also communicated my 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. Through a letter dated 13 June 2019, Deputy Minister Mekdad reiterated Syria’s position. I look forward to his response to my invitation for a delegation of the Syrian National Authority to come to The Hague.
21. Collection and analysis of all pertinent information, together with access to relevant sites and individuals, remains a primary objective of the IIT. It also affords all protagonists the opportunity to present data and information relevant from their own perspectives. The Team has a mandate to fulfil, which it will. I request all concerned States Parties to provide their full cooperation to the IIT. As the IIT was created following the adoption of decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 by the Conference at its Fourth

Special Session, it is the obligation of the Secretariat to continue implementing all aspects of that decision in the most professional and neutral way.

22. Approximately EUR 1.3 million in voluntary contributions is needed to support the IIT in 2019. To date, approximately EUR 1.2 million has been contributed or pledged. An additional EUR 100,000 is required this year. I thank Australia, Canada, Denmark, New Zealand, Norway, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the European Union for their contributions.
23. The Trust Fund for Syria Missions was established in November 2015 to support the OPCW's activities in Syria, including the work of the FFM, DAT, and IIT, and the biannual inspections of the SSRC. Today, total contributions to this fund stand at EUR 21.1 million. I thank Australia, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Monaco, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and the European Union for their generous support.
24. On 28 May, a comprehensive briefing was given to States Parties on all aspects of our work in Syria. At this briefing, I addressed the issue of the unauthorised disclosure of an internal document relating to the FFM report on the use of a toxic chemical in Douma 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). It is in the nature of any thorough inquiry for individuals in a team to possibly express subjective views. The overall conclusions of the inquiry, however, are based on the preponderance of objective facts. The Secretariat has, as it always does, considered and appropriately taken into account the content of the unauthorised disclosure. This does not have any bearing on the findings of the Douma report. Additionally, when elements were deemed to point at possible attribution, which is outside the mandate of the FFM with regard to the formulation of its findings, they were handed over to the IIT.
25. Since an internal working document was disclosed outside the Technical Secretariat, the Office of Confidentiality and Security has been collecting, preserving, and analysing information in order to understand how this document was disclosed. I have informed the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic and the Chairperson of the Executive Council that I have authorised a full confidentiality investigation. In order to protect the integrity of the investigation and the due process rights of anyone involved, and in accordance with normal practice in respect of ongoing investigations, no further information about the investigation is available at this time.
26. Turning to inspection-related activities, as in previous years, 241 Article VI inspections are planned to take place in 2019. Of these, 11 are planned at Schedule 1 facilities, 42 at Schedule 2 plant sites, 19 at Schedule 3 plant sites and 169, at other chemical production facilities (OCPFs).
27. As at the end of June 2019, 139 Article VI inspections had been carried out. I am confident that our programme will once again be fully implemented this year. A cross-divisional Technical Secretariat team has begun a broad review of the Article VI verification process in order to optimise our activities. We need to maintain the

relevance of the Secretariat activities related to the chemical industry. Progress in this work and any resulting recommendations will be reported to the Industry Cluster.

28. As we near completion of the destruction of declared chemical weapons, the OPCW is sharpening its focus on preventing their re-emergence. In this context, it is essential to ensure that skills, knowledge, and expertise remain at a high level in the Secretariat. Only a very well-trained workforce will deliver the high-quality service that States Parties expect and deserve, as they joined the Convention.
29. Taking the necessary measures to ensure that toxic chemicals are only used for non-prohibited purposes is an essential part of preventing re-emergence and compliance with Article VI of the Convention. At the meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism that took place on 8 July, an official of the European Commission briefed States Parties on the European Union's approach to chemicals of concern in terms of security. States Parties can learn from each other in this area, as the Council recognised in its decision on addressing the threat posed by the use of chemical weapons by non-State actors (EC-86/DEC.9, dated 13 October 2017). The Secretariat will look to take further steps, as part of its capacity-building programmes, to share best practices in this area.
30. Achieving our long-term goal of preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons will depend on retaining and developing our technical capabilities, a difficult challenge with the high-pace progress observed in science and technology. The ChemTech Centre project to upgrade our existing OPCW Laboratory and Equipment Store is central to this effort.
31. The Note entitled "Progress in the Project to Upgrade the OPCW Laboratory and Equipment Store to a Centre for Chemistry and Technology" (S/1769/2019, dated 9 July 2019) outlines the significant progress made on this initiative since the initiation of the project. It details the project scope, cost, and schedule, as well as its many expected benefits. The current cost estimate for the project is EUR 33.5 million. The completion of construction of the ChemTech Centre is now planned for the latter part of 2022.
32. Contributions totalling EUR 28.3 million have been pledged or received to support this project. I wish to thank the Government of the Netherlands, our Host Country, which has pledged the funding needed to acquire the land for the Centre. I wish to express my gratitude to the governments of Bangladesh, Belgium, Canada, Estonia, France, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Poland, the Republic of Korea, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and the European Union for their generous support.
33. To carry out the project according to schedule, the remaining EUR 5.2 million in funding will be needed within the next 12 months. This project will create tangible benefits for all States Parties, and will enable the development of further international cooperation and assistance-related activities. I therefore renew my appeal to all States Parties to support it. A briefing on the status of the project will take place on 10 July.
34. The Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) met for its Twenty-Eighth Session from 10 to 14 June. I would like to thank Saudi Arabia for its voluntary contribution to support the SAB's science communication activities and our Science for Diplomats

initiative. I encourage you all to attend today's Science for Diplomats event in the Ooms room.

35. During the intersessional period, the Secretariat has delivered 36 courses, seminars, and workshops to the benefit of more than 800 experts nominated by States Parties. This capacity-building support is provided in the areas of national implementation, assistance and protection, and fostering the peaceful uses of chemistry. The Secretariat also continued to address the needs of African States Parties within the framework of the fourth phase of the Africa Programme, which will come to a close at the end of the current calendar year.
36. I would like to express my appreciation to all States Parties that support and contribute to our international cooperation and assistance activities.
37. Civil society has made long-standing contributions to the goals of the Convention and remains an important partner for the OPCW. The application process for representatives of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to the next regular session of the Conference of the States Parties is now open. I am confident that States Parties will ensure swift decisions to enable participation by eligible NGOs.
38. Since assuming office, one of my priorities has been to achieve gender parity in the Organisation's senior management level. In particular, efforts were made to reach out to women with high-level profiles around the world. Three companies were used to better target our recruitment actions in this regard.
39. As a result, we received more applications from very good female candidates.
40. Today, I am very pleased to report that new appointments to these positions have increased the representation of women in the top management structure from 10% to 50%, while achieving geographical balance. Furthermore, on the subject of gender balance, I would like to stress that, since July last year, representation of women in the professional category is increasing from 21% to 27%.
41. With regard to geographical balance across the Secretariat, I would like to seize this opportunity to urge States Parties to strengthen their efforts to identify qualified candidates to apply for positions in the Secretariat.
42. On 5 July, I presented the draft Programme and Budget for 2020 to States Parties. This proposed programme of work is designed to allow the Organisation to continue to respond in a cost-efficient and results-oriented way to the many challenges ahead. Consultations with States Parties on the draft Programme and Budget will be held on 15 July, followed by a series of detailed consultations in September.
43. As I did last year with the revised draft Programme and Budget for 2019, I urge States Parties to consider further allowing the Secretariat to evolve into a zero real growth environment. Indeed, taking into account the impact of inflation for the period from 2009 to 2018, the budget of the OPCW has decreased by 20%. These costs go into our functioning and support, and therefore decrease the capacity of the Secretariat to perform activities for States Parties.

44. Finally, I wish to point out that as at 30 June, the collection level for 2019 assessed contributions was 53.7%, compared to 58.1% on the same date last year. As a result, cash inflows are considerably lower than forecasted. If this situation continues, the Working Capital Fund may have to be utilised already in the third quarter. I therefore urge all States Parties that have not yet paid their outstanding assessed contributions to do so at the earliest and in full.
45. As we move into the second half of the year, our horizon of activities appears intense and challenging. This is in keeping with recent trends, where our work has constantly evolved in response to unprecedented risks that the Convention has encountered. New expectations have been generated. Yet, what remains unchanged is the need to protect and uphold the norm against chemical weapons. When facing issues of such consequence, it is natural to expect divergences in approach. What is important, however, is to not lose sight of the imperative of progress. The Convention and the OPCW remain an example of unprecedented collective benefit. Our best efforts in making the Convention an abiding success are not behind us, but ahead of us.
46. Let us move forward in a spirit of cooperation and the well-known instinct of States Parties to find the common ground that has been, and—I am confident—that remains, our best asset.

Chemical demilitarisation and verification

47. As at 30 June 2019, the Secretariat had verified the destruction by possessor States Parties of 70,199.12 MT, or 97.08%, of all declared chemical weapons.

United States of America

48. As at the same date, the Secretariat had verified the destruction by the United States of America of 25,661 MT, or 92.42%, of its Category 1 chemical weapons stockpile. The United States of America plans to complete the destruction of the remaining 7.58% of its stockpile by no later than 2023.
49. In the United States of America, destruction operations at the main plant of the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant are ongoing. Three SDCs will be built next year in order to expedite the destruction operations at this facility.
50. Regarding the BGCAPP, construction of the main plant is complete. The Secretariat is currently conducting the final engineering review at the main plant and the destruction operations are expected to begin in autumn 2019.

Syrian Arab Republic

51. The Secretariat has verified the destruction of all 27 declared chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) declared by the Syrian Arab Republic. The continuous remote monitoring system installed in the four former CWPFs located in underground facilities is operating normally.
52. Pursuant to paragraph 11 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, the Secretariat is currently conducting the fifth round of inspections at the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the SSRC.

Old chemical weapons

53. During the intersessional period, two inspections were conducted at old chemical weapons (OCW) sites in Belgium and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Whilst destruction operations of OCWs have made considerable progress, recoveries continue to be made.

Abandoned chemical weapons

54. On 14 June, in pursuance of decision EC-67/DEC.6 (dated 15 February 2012), China and Japan invited the Council to visit the Haerbaling ACW destruction site in Jilin Province, China, from 2 to 7 September 2019.

Declarations

55. Regarding the submission of initial declarations, only one State Party, Tonga, has yet to submit its initial declaration under both Article III and Article VI of the Convention. The Secretariat continues to work with this State Party towards the submission of its outstanding initial declaration.
56. In relation to annual declarations, the Council has received a status report on the timely submission of declarations under Article VI for the period from 1 January to 31 May 2019 (EC-91/DG.11, dated 17 June 2019) for consideration at this session.
57. The timeliness of submissions of annual declarations on past activities (ADPA) has improved significantly. As at 31 May 2019, 84 (or 94%) of States Parties with declarable facilities and/or declarable activities had submitted their ADPA for 2018 on time. This is the highest number of this type of declarations received on time since the entry into force of the Convention. I welcome this improvement and I call upon States Parties to continue the timely submission of their annual declarations.

Inspector training

58. During the reporting period, the Capacity-Building and Contingency-Planning Cell of the Inspectorate Division provided, coordinated, or participated in nine training courses. The courses comprised 394 inspector/trainee days and 142 instructor days, and included a total of 105 participants.
59. From 18 to 22 March, an ordnance refresher training course for chemical weapons munitions specialist inspectors and chemical demilitarisation officers was conducted at the Munition Technical Museum in the Netherlands.
60. From 1 to 5 April, 23 inspectors and Secretariat staff members were provided with a five-day refresher toxic chemical training course, organised with the support of the Serbian Ministry of Defence at the CBRN¹ Centre in Kruševac, Serbia.
61. From 8 to 12 April, the instructors of the Capacity-Building and Contingency-Planning Cell conducted a non-routine mission enhancement exercise at

¹ CBRN = chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear.

the aforementioned CBRN Centre, as a follow-up to reconnaissance and sampling training.

62. On 14 May, the Inspectorate Division conducted an in-house challenge inspection table-top exercise for participants from the Inspectorate Division, Verification Division, Office of the Legal Adviser, and Office of Strategy and Policy.
63. The Ministry of Economy of Slovakia supported two training courses for inspectors at the Training and Testing Centre of Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Protection, Zemianske Kostol'any, in June. A training course on reconnaissance and sampling was provided from 3 to 8 June and a refresher training course on toxic chemicals was provided from 10 to 14 June.
64. From 15 to 19 June, the Inspectorate Division conducted an in-house Schedule 1 chemistry course for selected inspectors and a Health and Safety Officer.
65. From 18 to 20 June, the Capacity-Building and Contingency-Planning Cell implemented a training programme for the University of Rome "Tor Vergata's" CBRNe² Master's course.
66. I would like to thank the Netherlands, Serbia, Slovakia, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for the technical and in-kind support provided during the reporting period for these training modules for inspectors.

Article VI inspections

67. As was the case in previous years, the number of Article VI inspections planned for this year is 241. Of these, 11 are planned at Schedule 1 facilities, 42 at Schedule 2 plant sites, 19 at Schedule 3 plant sites, and 169 at OCPFs.
68. As at the end of June, 139 Article VI inspections had been carried out. This figure includes five at Schedule 1 facilities, 28 at Schedule 2 plant sites, eight at Schedule 3 plant sites, and 98 at OCPF plant sites. This represents 58% of the 241 inspections provided for in the Programme and Budget for 2019.
69. To date, six Article VI inspections with sampling and analysis have been completed: five at Schedule 2 plant sites and one at an OCPF plant site. A total of 120 Article VI inspections have been conducted using the gas chromatography–mass spectrometry (GC-MS) sampling and analysis methodology.

Industry Cluster

70. Consultations under the Industry Cluster held this week focused on the frequency of inspections at OCPF plant sites, the new electronic declarations platform, the possible use of blockchain technology to address transfer discrepancies, and highly active pharmaceutical ingredients. In May, a separate consultation was held to discuss a proposal made by a State Party to address improving the current site selection methodology; discussions on this subject will continue in future meetings.

²

CBRNe = chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive.

Specialised information technology solutions for verification activities

71. The Secretariat continues its modernisation of specialist information technology (IT) solutions for verification-related routine and non-routine activities. The Enterprise Content Management (ECM) system is being developed to improve the management of information and streamline business processes related to verification and other OPCW activities involving classified information. The first phase of the ECM system's development is complete and it is now ready for registering and managing records.
72. In August 2019, the Secretariat will release the first version of the new electronic declaration platform for National Authorities, the electronic declarations information system (EDIS), which will replace the electronic declarations tool for National Authorities (EDNA). EDIS will further strengthen the verification regime by bringing usability enhancements and new functionalities to the existing declaration preparation and submission process. The first release will include all EDNA features in the six official languages, with the addition of a new user management module for distributed use of the system and Article III riot-control agent declarations.
73. In 2018, the Secretariat improved the security of the Secure Information Exchange system (SIX) with the addition of a web application firewall and two-factor authentication. This year, the Secretariat is focusing on the migration of the SIX web application to a more modern and secure platform. National Authorities will be informed in due course of the modalities of this migration, as well as the timelines, expected changes, and expected actions to be taken.

International cooperation and assistance

Implementation support

74. The Secretariat is in the process of preparing the annual reports on the status of the implementation of Article VII of the Convention for the period from 1 August 2018 to 31 July 2019. I take this opportunity to encourage those States Parties that have yet to respond to do so as soon as possible.
75. In the area of the implementation of Article VII, the Secretariat continued to provide capacity building and technical assistance to States Parties to support the adoption of implementing legislation. Upon a request from Brunei Darussalam, the Secretariat provided technical support to a national legal workshop on the implementation of the Convention held in Bandar Seri Begawan on 26 and 27 March. The workshop was organised by the Ministry of Defence of Brunei and was attended by 40 representatives from 12 government ministries and agencies.
76. The Secretariat, in cooperation with the National Authority of Qatar, organised a round-table discussion on the role of parliamentarians in enhancing national implementation of the Convention. The event took place on 7 April in Doha, Qatar, in the margins of the 140th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). Over 25 parliamentarians and officials from Bangladesh, Chile, Mongolia, Qatar, and Spain attended.

77. The second pilot workshop on the role of implementing legislation in addressing threats arising from non-State actors was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from 9 to 11 April. The workshop aimed to raise the awareness of national stakeholders about how implementing legislation can contribute to addressing threats from non-State actors using toxic chemicals. The workshop was attended by over 50 participants from 12 States Parties in Asia, as well as representatives from a number of international and regional organisations.
78. The fifth session of the Influential Visitors Programme at the OPCW Headquarters was implemented for Togo from 27 to 29 May 2019. The programme involved briefings from the Secretariat, meetings with senior management, and a tour of the OPCW Laboratory and Equipment Store.
79. During the reporting period, regional meetings of National Authorities of States Parties in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean were held in Ethiopia, Mongolia, Latvia, and Mexico respectively. Each meeting featured discussions on regional priorities and topics. The latest version of the National Implementation Framework was once again shared with the participating States Parties.
80. From 21 to 23 May, Kenya hosted the subregional stakeholders' forum on advancing national implementation of the Convention and subregional cooperation in East Africa. The event was attended by 30 participants representing four member states of the East Africa Community (EAC), namely Burundi, Kenya, Uganda, and the United Republic of Tanzania, as well as representatives of the EAC Headquarters, the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, and the European Union's delegation to Kenya.
81. Under the Mentorship/Partnership Programme, representatives of the National Authority of Morocco visited Togo from 25 to 29 March; representatives of the National Authority of the Gambia visited the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from 8 to 12 April; and representatives of the National Authority of Afghanistan visited India from 29 April to 3 May. The visits provided an opportunity for National Authorities to share their experiences in the implementation of the Convention, to visit relevant facilities, and to discuss and plan follow-up actions.
82. A regional training course for States Parties in Latin America and the Caribbean on fulfilling declaration and inspection obligations under Article VI of the Convention was held in Panama City, Panama, from 25 to 29 March. Over 30 participants from 16 States Parties in the region benefited from the training course.

Assistance and protection

83. The Secretariat has compiled the annual submissions of States Parties pursuant to paragraph 4 of Article X of the Convention. A number of States Parties have yet to submit this report, which was due at the end of April. I encourage those States Parties that have not yet done so to submit their report for the year. The Secretariat remains at the disposal of any National Authority needing support in the timely and accurate submission of this report.

84. In the context of the International Support Network for Victims of Chemical Weapons, I would like to encourage contributions from States Parties to the trust fund that was set up for this network. This will enable the OPCW to maintain the momentum achieved thus far by implementing new activities in support of victims of chemical weapons.
85. During the reporting period, the assistance and protection programme targeted the full range of stakeholders involved in chemical emergency management and response at the international, regional, subregional, and national levels.
86. The sixth Swiss advanced assistance and protection course was jointly organised with the Government of Switzerland and was held in the city of Spiez, Switzerland, from 1 to 5 April. The course provided advanced training to an international audience on matters relevant to chemical emergency response. It was co-funded by the Secretariat and the Government of Switzerland.
87. A national workshop was held in Maputo, Mozambique, from 16 to 18 April within the project for strengthening the chemical emergency response planning and management of the Southern African Development Community Member States. The workshop supported Mozambique with the provision of tools for the development of a national protective programme against chemical weapons. This activity was fully funded from a voluntary contribution provided by Germany.
88. A regional advanced course and an exercise on assistance and protection for Arabic-speaking States Parties were held in Amman, Jordan, from 14 to 18 April. The training was the second and closing stage of the training cycle on assistance and protection against chemical weapons for Arabic-speaking States Parties in the Middle East and North Africa and was funded from a voluntary contribution provided by Germany.
89. The eighth advanced regional assistance and protection training course to respond to chemical emergencies was held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 29 April to 3 May, as the second stage of the 2019 regional cycle for the Latin American and Caribbean region. Subsequently, the third stage of the cycle, a regional exercise, was held from 3 to 7 June in Rio de Janeiro, with the support of the Government of Brazil.
90. The Secretariat organised a table-top exercise for Member States of the Economic Community of West African States in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, from 7 to 9 May. This exercise was co-funded by the Secretariat and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
91. A number of specialised training courses were conducted by the Secretariat in the intersessional period. This included the seventh international training course on sampling and analysis in a contaminated environment in Częstochowa, Poland, from 3 to 7 May; live agent training for experts in Zemianske Kostol'any, Slovakia, from 13 to 24 May; and assistance and protection training for instructors in Lázně Bohdaneč, Czech Republic, from 29 May to 6 June.
92. As the first stage of the 2019 regional training cycle in Asia, a basic assistance and protection course for first responders was jointly held by the Secretariat and the Government of the Republic of Korea in Seoul, from 13 to 17 May 2019.

93. As a continuation of the second assistance and protection training cycle for Portuguese-speaking countries, an advanced course on assistance and protection was jointly organised by the Secretariat and the Government of Portugal and held in Lisbon, from 20 to 24 May.
94. A basic assistance and protection course was jointly organised with Switzerland in the city of Spiez, from 3 to 7 June 2019. The course provided basic training to international participants on matters relevant to chemical emergency response. This course was co-funded by the Government of Switzerland and the Secretariat.
95. A basic course on assistance and protection was organised and conducted with the support of the Government of Serbia in the city of Kruševac, from 17 to 21 June. This training was the first stage of an international training cycle on chemical emergency response for first responders.
96. An exercise for Russian-speaking instructors was organised with the support of the Government of Belarus and conducted in the city of Svetlaja Roshcha, from 23 to 26 June.

International cooperation

97. In the area of international cooperation under Article XI, the Secretariat continued to offer numerous capacity-building programmes to States Parties, as well as to promote uses of chemistry for peaceful purposes and to promote networking among States Parties.
98. The Secretariat organised the inaugural workshop on developing tools on chemical safety and security management at the OPCW Headquarters, from 25 to 27 March. Twenty-one representatives from international and regional organisations, government agencies, chemical industries, academia, and relevant stakeholders participated in this workshop. It provided a platform for the Secretariat and panel experts to develop a guidance document on chemical safety and security for small and medium-sized enterprises.
99. The Secretariat organised a basic analytical chemistry course for five participants from Qatar at the OPCW Laboratory, from 8 to 12 April. This course provided the basic analytical skills related to chemicals relevant to the Convention.
100. An analytical skills development course in Spanish for Member States in the Latin American and Caribbean Region was held in Madrid, Spain, from 3 to 14 June. The objective of the course was to improve practical skills in analysing chemicals related to the Convention and in using GC and GC-MS for 17 participants.
101. Under the Chemical Safety and Security Management Programme, a capacity-building workshop for African Member States was held from 23 to 25 June in Algiers, Algeria, focusing on the development of a national framework to manage chemical safety and security risk to prevent chemical accidents and potential misuse of toxic chemicals.
102. The Secretariat organised the fourth Symposium on Women in Chemistry in The Hague on 24 June. Participants from more than 30 countries attended the symposium,

including representatives from States Parties, the scientific community, academia, the chemical industry, and civil society. This event was co-funded by the Government of Canada and the Secretariat.

103. The Secretariat organised a basic analytical chemistry course for women chemists at the OPCW Laboratory, from 25 to 28 June. Ten participants attended this course and the OPCW Laboratory provided them with basic analytical skills related to chemicals under the Convention.
104. The Secretariat organised the fourth edition of the review and evaluation workshop of the components of an agreed framework for the full implementation of Article XI at OPCW Headquarters on 1 July. The workshop provided a platform for State Party representatives to discuss needs, experiences, lessons learned, and best practices related to the implementation of Article XI.
105. In addition, the Secretariat organised a course for analytical chemists from laboratories supporting customs services, from 8 to 12 July, at the OPCW Laboratory. It was the third time that this course was organised in conjunction with the OPCW Laboratory in support of chemists from customs and forensic laboratories.
106. In the area of chemical knowledge promotion and exchange, three fellowships (for a Kenyan participant in Germany, a Malaysian participant in Finland, and a Ugandan participant in Sweden) were completed. A further three fellowships are currently ongoing (Cameroon – France, Panama – Finland, and Uganda – South Africa). The Secretariat also provided financial support to 19 research projects under the Research Support Programme and six conferences in four States Parties (Botswana, Italy, the Netherlands, and the United Republic of Tanzania) under the Conference Support Programme.

OPCW Laboratory

107. The OPCW Laboratory completed the evaluation of the Forty-Fifth Environmental Proficiency Test and the Fourth Biomedical Proficiency Test. The final results will be available before the end of July. Based on the preliminary results, the number of designated laboratories will remain unchanged. The Secretariat has also concluded a third exercise on the analysis of biotoxins.
108. Our designated laboratory system remains strong and critical to our mission. We currently have 22 laboratories from 18 States Parties that are designated for the analysis of environmental samples and 17 laboratories from 13 States Parties designated for the analysis of biomedical samples.
109. We have seen progress in the negotiation of technical agreements with laboratories, including the signing of a new agreement this month. However, a significant number of designated laboratories remain without such an agreement. I take this opportunity to encourage all laboratories that have not yet done so to actively negotiate agreements with the Secretariat.
110. As mentioned, we have made progress in our project to upgrade the OPCW Laboratory and Equipment Store to become a Centre for Chemistry and Technology. Once again, I would like to ask all States Parties for their support on this project,

which will create tangible benefits for the Secretariat and States Parties in the effective implementation of the Convention. Furthermore, I would like to repeat my request to all States Parties for voluntary contributions to the trust fund that was created in support this important initiative.

Change to the Annex on Chemicals

111. On 9 April, the Secretariat received an objection from the Russian Federation to the outcome of the Sixty-Second Meeting of the Council, held on 14 January 2019, which considered the joint proposal of Canada, the Netherlands, and the United States of America to amend the Annex on Chemicals under Article XV of the Convention. Also on 9 April, the Secretariat received an objection from Burundi to the outcome of the Sixty-Third Meeting of the Council, held on 25 February 2019, which considered the proposals of the Russian Federation to amend the Annex on Chemicals under Article XV of the Convention. The Article XV submissions will now be considered as matters of substance by the Conference of the States Parties at its next session.

External relations

112. On 22 September, the OPCW will again open its doors to the public during The Hague International Open Day, coordinated by The Hague Municipality. After breaking the record of over one thousand visitors last year and reaching over 300,000 people from around the world through Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, we aim to again offer an informative and engaging programme.
113. During the intersessional period, I met with the NATO Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs and Security Policy, H.E. Ambassador Alejandro Alvargonzález, as well as the Secretary-General of the World Customs Organization, H.E. Mr Kunio Mikuriya. On 2 April, I visited the Russian Federation, where I met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr Sergey Lavrov and Minister of Industry and Trade, H.E. Mr Denis Manturov. On 12 April, I held bilateral meetings in the United States of America with Deputy Under-Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment, Mr Alan Shaffer; Assistant Secretary of State for Arms Control, Verification, and Compliance, Ms Yleem Poblete; and Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Weapons of Mass Destruction and Biodefense, Mr Tim Morrison. On 23 May, I delivered a keynote address at the 22nd Annual Chemical Weapons Demilitarisation Conference and met with the Minister of State for Defence of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Rt Hon Earl Howe; Director of the Defence and International Security Directorate at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Ms Samantha Job; and the Minister of State for the Commonwealth and the United Nations at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon. On 6 June, I took part in the GLOBSEC 2019 Conference and met the State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of Slovakia, František Ružička, and the State Secretary of the Ministry of Economy, Mr Rastislav Chovanec. In the same month I visited Japan, where I held bilateral meetings with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr Tarō Kōno; the Minister of Defence, H.E. Mr Takeshi Iwaya; the Minister for Science and Technology Policy, H.E. Mr Takuya Hirai; the State Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, Mr Yoshihiko Isozaki; and the Director-General of the Non-Proliferation, Disarmament and Science Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan,

Mr Tomoyuki Yoshida. While in Japan, I delivered a lecture at the Integrated Center for United Nations and Foreign Affairs Studies at Kwansei Gakuin University in Nishinomiya and delivered a speech to a seminar hosted by the Center for the Promotion of Disarmament and Non-Proliferation in Tokyo.

114. Over the reporting period, I received at the OPCW Headquarters the Deputy Foreign Minister of Multilateral and Global Affairs of the Republic of Korea, Mr Kang Jeong-Sik and the Director-General of International Security Policy, Global Affairs, Canada, Ms Cindy Termorshuizen.

Administrative and financial matters

115. From 4 to 6 June, the Advisory Body on Administrative and Financial Matters (ABAF) met for its Forty-Sixth Session, and considered a number of administrative and financial issues (ABAF-46/1, dated 7 June 2019). I welcome the continuing advice and support provided by the ABAF and note that the Secretariat's response to the ABAF's report has been issued (EC-91/DG.19*, dated 1 July 2019).
116. In accordance with the extension of the Tenancy Agreement for the OPCW Headquarters building through 2028, the final payment of EUR 250,000 has been received to bring the landlord contributions to a total value of EUR 1.4 million, in accordance with the agreed modified schedule of payment (S/1493/2017, dated 4 May 2017), all of which have been credited to the Working Capital Fund.
117. Following recommendations by the External Auditor and the Office of Internal Oversight, governance tools were launched in late May, including an internal control framework and self-assessment control questionnaire for Directors and Branch Heads. These tools will serve as means to support the Director-General's Statement of Internal Control, which accompanies the OPCW annual Financial Statements.

Gender balance

118. The Secretariat's new Gender Focal Points have received initial training on gender concepts (based on the United Nations curriculum) and gender bias. They are currently collaborating on a gender mainstreaming work plan with measurable objectives for each division.

Human capital management

119. A new on-boarding application has been launched that provides information for new staff joining the Secretariat.
120. A new performance management approach is being introduced within the Secretariat that moves towards more emphasis on staff development through meaningful and development-oriented performance conversations and a qualitative appraisal. Staff and managers will be encouraged to have monthly check-ins and track progress towards the staff member's objectives. This change will be supported and facilitated by a new performance management system that will be implemented over the coming months.

121. A redesigned peer recognition programme was launched in June. The new programme offers easy and transparent mechanisms to recognise exemplary work or behaviours that are aligned with the OPCW's values, tackle current challenges within the OPCW, and improve sharing, communication, and collaboration within the Organisation.

Enterprise resource planning

122. Implementation of the core System of Record solution remains ongoing, and is currently in the user acceptance testing phase, which includes a full regression test. The actual system go-live date will be subject to review based upon the relative operational and technical risks of a 2019 fourth quarter cutover, compared to a 2020 first quarter cutover.
123. In parallel, implementation of the Talent Management Solution has continued, and the Recruitment module is already in service. The Learning and Development module and a pilot of the Performance Management module are planned to be launched in the second half of 2019, with a full roll-out planned for early 2020.

Information technology

124. The Information Services Branch (ISB) has been working closely with the IIT to deliver the IT infrastructure needed to support the IIT's mission. The ISB has also developed a new version of the assistance and protection databank for the International Cooperation and Assistance Division. The software will enable States Parties to submit Article X declarations electronically and to view the contents of the databank online.

Knowledge management

125. A Senior Knowledge Management Officer has been recruited and joined the Secretariat in March to further strengthen efforts to ensure that expert knowledge is identified, preserved, and shared.
126. The Secretariat reached out to approximately 3,000 visitors at the Open Day of the European External Action Service of the European Union, held on 4 May in Brussels, Belgium. This was the third time the OPCW was invited to this event, which helps to raise the profile of the Organisation.
127. Applications are now open for the tenth edition of the T.M.C. Asser Institute's Programme on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, taking place from 30 September to 4 October. I encourage you to promote this important event, which is aimed at early- to mid-career professionals. For the first time, with the support of funds from the European Union, the OPCW is offering up to four competitive scholarships to representatives of civil society interested in strengthening their understanding about disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.