



Ninety-Second Session  
8 – 11 October 2019

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**NOTE BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL**

**REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ADVISORY BOARD  
ON EDUCATION AND OUTREACH COVERING THE PERIOD  
FROM 1 SEPTEMBER 2018 TO 31 AUGUST 2019**

1. Paragraph 18 of the Terms of Reference of the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach (ABEO), as adopted by the Conference of the States Parties (hereinafter “the Conference”) at its Twentieth Session (Annex to C-20/DEC.9, dated 3 December 2015), provides for the submission by the Director-General of an annual report to the Executive Council (hereinafter “the Council”) and to the Conference on the ABEO’s activities. This is the fourth such report, covering the activities of the ABEO from 1 September 2018 to 31 August 2019, including its Seventh and Eighth Sessions. The reports of those sessions (ABEO-7/1, dated 28 February 2019 and ABEO-8/1, dated 22 August 2019) serve as the basis for this report.
2. With the first term of office of ABEO members expiring at the end of 2018, the Director-General issued a call for nominations for ABEO membership from 2019 to 2021 (S/1574/2018, dated 31 January 2018), noting the need to start a process of rotating memberships and outlining areas of expertise particularly relevant to the Board’s anticipated work for the period from 2019 to 2021.
3. States Parties have since been informed of the new composition of the ABEO from 1 January 2019 onward (EC-90/DG.3 C-24/DG.1, dated 12 December 2018). The Director-General is confident that the skills and expertise of the eight new ABEO members will allow the Board to continue to provide quality advice and assist the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter “the Secretariat”) and States Parties in their education and outreach activities.

**Intersessional activities (September 2018 to February 2019)**

4. During the intersessional period leading up to its Seventh Session, the Board (in its original composition) completed the brochure for States Parties’ use in their engagement activities with relevant stakeholder groups. The document has been made



available on the OPCW public website and has subsequently been translated into all official languages of the Organisation.<sup>1</sup>

5. Furthermore, ABEO members conducted additional relevant activities during the intersessional period, either individually or as a group. Noteworthy in the latter category is the drafting of a handover note for the new membership of the Board from January 2019 onward. The note identified three areas for the ABEO's consideration: follow-up from the 2018 ABEO "Report on the Role of Education and Outreach in Preventing the Re-emergence of Chemical Weapons" (ABEO-5/1, dated 12 February 2018), completion of unfinished business from previous meetings, and general issues for continuous follow-up (agenda item 8 of ABEO-7/1).

### **Seventh Session of the Board**

6. The ABEO's Seventh Session, for which the Secretariat provided its customary assistance to the Board, took place over three days, from 26 to 28 February 2019. In accordance with its terms of reference, the Board appointed Dr Jean Pascal Zanders as Chairperson and Dr Jo Husbands as Vice-Chairperson of the ABEO for 2019.
7. The Director-General opened the Seventh Session with remarks on States Parties' continued engagement with the OPCW's mission. He encouraged the ABEO to further expand resources on education and outreach, focusing specifically on developing active learning and online learning activities to aid the Secretariat and States Parties in their capacity-building efforts. He also underlined the importance of increasing public awareness of the OPCW and its activities.
8. The Secretary to the ABEO updated the Board on developments at the OPCW during the intersessional period, highlighting the outcomes of two major events held in November 2018, namely, the Twenty-Third Session of the Conference and 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"). He also informed the Board that States Parties had decided to establish a mechanism to enable the Organisation to investigate chemical weapons use in the Syrian Arab Republic and to identify the perpetrators (C-SS-4/DEC.3, dated 27 June 2018). The Organisation's Science Policy Adviser also briefed the Board on the activities of the OPCW's Scientific Advisory Board (SAB).
9. Given the new composition of the ABEO, members introduced themselves and outlined their specific skills and areas of interest, and explained how these could be leveraged to further the ABEO's education and outreach objectives (agenda item 5 of ABEO 7/1).
10. In addition, the Board met with the Division Directors and Branch Heads of the Secretariat, who presented their responsibilities and tasks in order to familiarise new Board members with the framework and activities of the OPCW. Also during its Seventh Session, the Board discussed its 2018 "Report on the Role of Education and

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<sup>1</sup> The English version can be accessed at <https://www.opcw.org/resources/documents/subsidiary-bodies/advisory-board-education-and-outreach>.

Outreach in Preventing the Re-emergence of Chemical Weapons” (ABEO-5/1) and concluded that priority matrices and strategic frameworks could assist the Board in structuring its work to advance the Organisation’s education and outreach activities. In addition, Board members agreed on four streams of activities to be pursued during the following intersessional period and identified two areas to review at its next session.

### **Intersessional activities (March to August 2019)**

11. During the intersessional period between the Seventh and Eighth Sessions, the ABEO followed up on its work plan objectives (subitem 8(d) of ABEO 7/1). The four streams of activities were organised through the creation of four intersessional working groups, which would:
  - (a) explore the topic of the “history of chemical weapons use” as a possible educational tool;
  - (b) prepare a new list of “Other Resources” for the education and outreach resources page on the OPCW public website as part of the Board’s 2019 Work Plan;
  - (c) support the adoption of active learning approaches and contribute to the improvement of presentation skills of Secretariat staff; and
  - (d) consult on and prepare new education and outreach materials by the end of 2019.
12. In addition, ABEO members conducted several relevant activities, on which they reported during the Board’s Eighth Session (agenda item 5 of ABEO-8/1).

### **Eighth Session of the Board**

13. The ABEO’s Eighth Session, to which the Secretariat provided its usual support, took place for three days, from 20 to 22 August 2019.
14. The Director-General opened the Board’s Eighth Session and noted the ongoing work of Board members on exploring the history of chemical weapons, active learning, and the creation of new education and outreach materials, which could also be linked from the OPCW website. He emphasised the importance of the Board’s initiative on e-learning and noted that e-learning would enhance the ability to engage with a wide variety of stakeholders both inside and outside the OPCW.
15. During its Eighth Session, the Board received a general update from the Secretary to the ABEO on recent developments at the OPCW, including follow-up activities after the Fourth Review Conference, and developments at the Council sessions in March and July 2019. The Board furthermore received a report by the Science Policy Adviser on the recent session of the SAB and additional science and technology-related trends and developments.

16. The Head of the Public Affairs Branch addressed Board members on the Secretariat's approach to crisis communication and on how to reach out to stakeholders through emerging online technologies. In addition, the Head of the Investigation and Identification Team briefed the Board on his team's mandate and working methods, as presented to the Council at its Ninety-First Session in a Note by the Secretariat (EC-91/S/3, dated 28 June 2019). The ABEO also received updates from Board members on their intersessional activities.
17. The Board devoted a significant part of its Eighth Session to a discussion on progress made by the intersessional working groups, particularly in relation to developing new education and outreach tools, the history of chemical weapons use, and developing training to support the adoption of active learning approaches by the Organisation. In addition, ABEO member Dr Craig Cormick facilitated a priority-setting exercise for the Board's upcoming work.
18. The Board unanimously elected Dr Jo Husbands as the Chairperson and Dr Adriana Bernacchi as Vice-Chairperson of the ABEO for 2020, and plans to meet again in March 2020 for its Ninth Session.

### **Conclusions**

19. The Director-General looks forward to seeing the practical results of the ABEO's current projects, such as developing active learning resources and e-learning capabilities for the Secretariat to engage with a wide variety of audiences. Such resources and capabilities could also assist States Parties in engaging relevant stakeholders.
20. The Director-General welcomes the more structured approach the Board has adopted, focussing on practical outputs to be made available to the Organisation at different points in time over the coming months. The Director-General expects such practical tools to remain a central element in ABEO activities in 2020 and beyond.
21. The Director-General further appreciates the willingness of Board members to continue to share their expertise in highly topical areas of education and outreach, such as active learning or the increasing use of e-learning to enhance both the quality and quantity of the Organisation's education and outreach portfolio.
22. The Director-General thanks all ABEO members for their commitment to the Board and for their contributions, both collectively and in an individual capacity, during the period covered by this report.