



NOTE BY THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT

**UPDATE ON EVENTS ORGANISED BY THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT IN THE
AREA OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE
MAY – AUGUST 2019**

INTRODUCTION

1. The aim of this Note is to provide the States Parties of the OPCW with information on a four-monthly basis regarding the capacity-building activities delivered by the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter “the Secretariat”) through its international cooperation and assistance programmes. These programmes support States Parties’ efforts to effectively implement the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter “the Convention”), in particular Articles VII, X, and XI thereof. This Note covers the period from 1 May to 31 August 2019.

IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT – ARTICLE VII

Eighteenth regional meeting of National Authorities of States Parties in Eastern Europe, Riga, Latvia, 14 to 16 May 2019

2. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the challenges facing States Parties and share good practices in national implementation of the Convention, especially in the area of chemical safety and security, and to discuss the national implementation framework that is developed by the Secretariat in order to assist States Parties in streamlining the national implementation process.
3. The meeting achieved the anticipated objectives by enhancing awareness and knowledge of the current status of the implementation of the Convention, taking stock of achievements and challenges for effective implementation, especially in the area of chemical safety and security management and the verification regime, which will in turn lead to more effective implementation of the Convention in the region. The national implementation framework was well received and the methodology of the risk assessment should be further developed. The meeting also helped to intensify networking and collaboration among the National Authorities, and provided a good opportunity to discuss mechanisms for assisting the National Authority, with a view to effective functioning.
4. The event was attended by 28 participants from 20 States Parties in the Eastern Europe region.



Subregional stakeholders' forum on advancing national implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and subregional cooperation in East Africa, Nairobi, Kenya, 21 to 23 May 2019

5. The purpose of the forum was to assist African States Parties from the same subregion with implementation of the Convention by providing them with a platform for sharing national experiences and good practices in relation to various aspects of implementation. Representatives of the participating States Parties clarified their current status of implementation of the Convention, improved their understanding of the national stakeholders' roles in implementation, learned about good implementation practices from their peers, and planned the next steps in the implementation process.
6. 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 delegation of the European Union to Kenya.

Influential Visitors Programme, The Hague, the Netherlands, 27 to 29 May 2019

7. The fifth edition of the Influential Visitors Programme was organised at OPCW Headquarters from 27 to 29 May 2019 with a high-level delegation from Togo, including two members of the Togolese Parliament. The programme was aimed at providing assistance to Togo in moving forward the process of adoption of its draft implementing legislation on the Convention.
8. During the visit, the delegates received briefings from the Secretariat on various aspects of the Convention, visited the OPCW Laboratory, and had meetings with senior Secretariat officials, including the Director-General. At the end of the programme, the Togolese delegates presented an indicative action plan which narrated the next steps in the legislative adoption process, the specific actions to be undertaken by relevant stakeholders, and an indicative timeline against which the Secretariat will be able to monitor the progress of the draft bill for implementation of the Convention.

Twentieth regional meeting of National Authorities of States Parties in Latin America and the Caribbean, Mexico City, Mexico, 4 to 6 June 2019

9. The annual meeting provided the opportunity for the National Authorities to discuss ways to strengthen regional cooperation and enhance inter-agency coordination in implementing their obligations under the Convention. The participants exchanged views on issues relating to the verification system under the Convention, the new tool for online submission of annual declarations, and capacity-building needs for fulfilling obligations under Article VI. They also shared best practices in national coordination mechanisms for the collection of information with a view to the timely submission of annual declarations.
10. The participants stressed the importance of adopting implementing legislation to effectively regulate toxic chemicals and respond to the threats posed by their potential misuse. The importance of the role of the OPCW in providing training to personnel

from National Authorities to overcome the challenge of high staff turnover was also highlighted.

11. The annual regional meeting was attended by representatives of 23 OPCW States Parties from the region, including a representative of the Caribbean Community.

Seventeenth regional meeting of National Authorities of African States Parties, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 12 to 14 June 2019

12. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the needs and priorities of the African States Parties in implementation of the Convention at the national, subregional, and regional levels. During the meeting, the National Authority representatives exchanged their views on practical issues related to the implementation of the Convention, and discussed the results that can be achieved through capacity-building programmes offered by the Secretariat. The inputs from the participants and outcomes of the discussions will be considered when designing the fifth phase of the OPCW's Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa on the Chemical Weapons Convention.
13. The meeting was attended by more than 50 participants from 34 African States Parties, as well as representatives of the African Union Commission, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the World Customs Organization (WCO), and the International Council of Chemical Associations.

National awareness-raising and legislative assistance workshop, Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan, 20 to 22 June 2019

14. A national awareness-raising and legislative assistance workshop on the implementation of the Convention was held in Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan, from 20 to 22 June 2019. The workshop was organised by the Ministry of Economy of Kyrgyzstan in cooperation with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and with funding support from the European Union. The OPCW provided technical support to the workshop at the request of Kyrgyzstan. It was attended by 25 representatives from relevant government ministries and agencies and aimed to support Kyrgyzstan in advancing its efforts towards national implementation of the Convention, including the adoption of implementing legislation. Upon the conclusion of the event, Kyrgyzstan finalised the text of its draft implementing legislation and discussed the steps to be taken to advance its adoption.

Seventeenth regional meeting of National Authorities of States Parties in Asia, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, 25 to 27 June 2019

15. In this annual forum of National Authorities of Asian States Parties, 52 participants from 32 States Parties got together to review the status of national implementation of the Convention together. The meeting discussed three main themes: Article VI verification system, chemical risk assessment and management, and implementation of obligations under Article VII as well as overall requirements under the Convention. The meeting produced an outcome report that summarised discussions held under each theme. The participants of this meeting supported the idea of establishing a regional coordinator of National Authorities in Asia that will act as the custodian of challenges and achievements of the region discussed in the meeting, and host the

regional meeting of National Authorities. The modality of this approach will be further discussed during the annual meeting of the National Authorities in The Hague in November 2019.

Regional training-of-trainers course for representatives of customs training institutions in States Parties in Asia on technical aspects of the transfers regime of the Chemical Weapons Convention, Vientiane, Laos, 16 to 19 July 2019

16. The purpose of the course was to strengthen the capacity of the States Parties in the Asia region to implement the Convention's transfers regime for scheduled chemicals by assisting them with the introduction of Convention-related modules in their respective national customs training programmes. Representatives of the participating States Parties clarified their current status of implementation of the Convention, and increased their knowledge about the transfers regime and the tools to identify toxic chemicals. The course also served to build stronger partnerships between National Authorities and customs authorities. An important output of the course is the development by each State Party of action plans for national customs training on Convention-related issues.
17. The event was attended by more than 50 participants representing 14 States Parties from Asia and was implemented in cooperation with the WCO.

Technical workshop on the sharing of best practices in the development of a legislative and regulatory framework on chemical security, The Hague, the Netherlands, 24 and 25 July 2019

18. The pilot technical workshop on the sharing of best practices in the development of a legislative and regulatory framework on chemical security was held on 24 and 25 July 2019 at OPCW Headquarters. The workshop provided a forum for sharing information on participating States Parties' legal and regulatory framework on chemical security, as well as for discussing approaches in the development of chemical security measures. At the end of the event, the participants were informed about existing international and national legal and regulatory frameworks on chemical security. The workshop was attended by more than 20 participants from 12 States Parties and representatives from international organisations and industry associations.

Internship Programme for Legal Drafters and National Authority Representatives, The Hague, the Netherlands, 26 to 30 August 2019

19. The 22nd edition of the programme was attended by six participants from three States Parties: Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Tuvalu. During the programme, participants received a series of presentations delivered by Secretariat staff and drafted implementing legislation that complies with the provisions of the Convention. As part of a results-based approach, the participants also prepared action plans and indicative road maps to support the adoption process.

ASSISTANCE AND PROTECTION – ARTICLE X

Table-top exercise for Member States of the Economic Community of West African States, Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire, 7 to 9 May 2019

20. This table-top exercise was jointly planned by the Secretariat and the Government of Côte D’Ivoire and was held within the capacity-building programme for the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Participants discussed and practised operational frameworks, policy making, and communication and information sharing at national and regional levels, in order to ensure effective national and regional responses and facilitation of international assistance in the event of incidents involving chemical warfare agents or toxic chemicals.
21. Twenty-nine first responders from 11 ECOWAS countries attended the exercise, which was conducted with the support of experts from Indonesia and Luxembourg under the Instructor Exchange Programme. The exercise was co-funded by the Secretariat and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Basic assistance and protection course for States Parties in the Asia region, Seoul, Republic of Korea, 13 to 17 May 2019

22. This course was designed to train first responders in the region, with the main focus on emergency response to chemical incidents. It covered topics such as identification and detection of chemical warfare agents, protection of personnel during a chemical emergency, decontamination operations, and rescue and first aid in contaminated areas.
23. The course attracted 25 experts from 12 States Parties in Asia and served as the first stage of the regional training cycle for the Asia region in 2019. The course was funded from the regular budget.

Seventh international training course on conducting sampling and analysis in a highly contaminated environment, Częstochowa, Poland, 13 to 17 May 2019

24. The training took place at the Polish Central School of the State Fire Service in the city of Częstochowa, in close collaboration with the Polish army and the firefighter corps of the city of Katowice, and provided full theoretical and intensive practical training on the sampling and analysis of toxic chemical substances, which is of crucial importance in cases in which obtaining and preserving evidence of events involving chemical warfare agents and/or toxic industrial chemicals are required.
25. Twenty participants from 18 States Parties attended the training, which was funded from the regular budget.

Live agent training for experts, Zemianske Kostol’any, Slovakia, 13 to 23 May 2019

26. This training followed the foundational basic and advanced course progression, as well as the “train the trainers” approach. It was conducted, as on previous occasions, at the NBC Technical Training Centre in Zemianske Kostol’any, Slovakia.

27. All participants were invited based on prior exposure to OPCW training and/or demonstrated professional expertise. Twenty experts from all geographical regions attended this training, which was funded from the regular budget.

Second advanced assistance and protection course for Portuguese-speaking States Parties, Montijo, Portugal, 20 to 24 May 2019

28. This assistance and protection training course was jointly organised by the Secretariat and the Government of Portugal. The training was held at the Portuguese Air Base No. 6 Survival Training Centre in Montijo and was specifically designed for participants who attended the basic course for Portuguese-speaking countries in Brazil in 2018.
29. Twenty-six participants from eight Portuguese-speaking States Parties and from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela attended the course, which was funded from the regular budget.

Fifth international assistance and protection course for instructors, Lázně Bohdaneč, Czech Republic, 29 May to 6 June 2019

30. The course was intended for instructors from States Parties with the purpose of equipping them with knowledge on the planning, preparation, conduct, and evaluation of response operations in contaminated areas in the event of incidents involving chemical warfare agents or toxic industrial chemicals. The course included a component on complex emergency responses to crisis situations involving chemical weapons or toxic industrial chemicals.
31. Nineteen experts from 17 States Parties attended this new edition of the international assistance and protection course for instructors. The training was funded from the regular budget.

Swiss basic assistance and protection course, Spiez, Switzerland, 3 to 7 June 2019

32. This annual basic course on assistance and protection is intended to supplement the OPCW's assistance and protection endeavours to help States Parties implement Article X of the Convention and was aimed at improving States Parties' preparedness in the field of response to chemical incidents or attacks involving chemical warfare agents.
33. The course, which was jointly organised by the Government of Switzerland and the Secretariat, attracted 27 participants from all geographical regions. The course was co-funded by the Government of Switzerland and the Secretariat.

Thirteenth international basic assistance and protection course, Kruševac, Serbia, 17 to 21 June 2019

34. This training course was designed to build the professional capabilities of a group of international first responders with the main focus on emergency response to chemical incidents. It covered topics such as identification and detection of chemical warfare agents, protection of personnel during a chemical emergency, decontamination operations, and rescue and first aid in contaminated areas.

35. The course was attended by 25 first responders from 13 States Parties and was funded from the regular budget.

OPCW module of the 2019 CBRNe¹ Master's course of the University of Rome – Tor Vergata, The Hague, the Netherlands, 17 to 21 June 2019

36. This course was held at the request of the University of Rome – Tor Vergata to provide two groups of 23 (level I) and 29 (level II) students of the Master's course with knowledge on protective measures in a contaminated area and response to a chemical incident, as well as on the OPCW and its activities as part of the Master's curriculum. The course, which included practical training, was conducted with the support of OPCW inspectors and was completely funded by the University of Rome – Tor Vergata.

Assistance and protection course for Russian-speaking instructors, Svetlaya Roshcha, Belarus, 24 to 28 June 2019

37. This training course was held at the International Rescuers Training Centre of the University of Civil Protection of the Ministry of Emergency Situations of Belarus in Svetlaya Roshcha.
38. The training provided 13 participants with practical skills in developing and implementing training programmes on the use of individual and collective protective equipment, monitoring, detection, and decontamination equipment, as well as countermeasures in the event of incidents involving chemical warfare agents or toxic chemicals. The course was funded from the regular budget.

National training: Chemical Incident Preparedness for Hospitals, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 22 to 24 July 2019

39. This capacity-building engagement was a national output held under the Chemical Incident Preparedness for Hospitals (HOSPREP) project. The programme comprised a two-day seminar and training on medical institution preparedness for incidents involving chemical weapons or weaponised toxic industrial chemicals. The audience consisted of medical administrators and clinicians from across Bangladesh, as well as representatives from the World Health Organization country office in Dhaka.
40. The training was prepared in close coordination between the National Authority of Bangladesh and the Secretariat and was hosted by the Dhaka Medical College Hospital and Combined Military Hospital (Dhaka). This activity was supported by a voluntary contribution from the Government of Germany, with all national costs borne by the Government of Bangladesh.

¹ CBRNe = chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive.

First regional training course on sampling and analysis in contaminated environments for States Parties in the Latin America and Caribbean region, Bogotá, Colombia, 12 to 16 August 2019

41. This regional training course was organised for the first time by the Secretariat in close cooperation with the Directorate of Criminal Investigation and Interpol of the Colombian National Police and with PONALSAR, the specialised emergency and disaster response unit of the Colombian National Police. The Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory of the United States of America supported the course through the Instructor Exchange Programme administered by the OPCW Assistance and Protection Branch (APB).
42. Twenty-six participants from 14 States Parties were made familiar with the relevant theory and received hands-on training on chemical and environmental sampling techniques. The training was funded from the regular budget.

Subregional training on chemical emergency response for first responders in West Africa, Accra, Ghana, 12 to 16 August 2019

43. This operational training course was jointly organised by the Secretariat and the Government of Ghana and targeted ECOWAS Member States. The training was held at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre in the city of Accra.
44. Forty experts from the OPCW States Parties in the ECOWAS subregion attended the training. Participants were provided with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to conduct the necessary operations in the aftermath of a chemical weapons attack or incident involving toxic industrial chemicals. Management of and response to chemical incidents included practice in the use of individual and collective protective equipment, monitoring, detection, decontamination, and sampling techniques. The training was supported by the Swiss army in terms of instructors and equipment and was funded from the regular budget and a voluntary contribution by the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

National protection workshop, Windhoek, Namibia, 13 to 16 August 2019

45. This workshop was aimed at supporting the development of national programmes for protective purposes and was conducted at the request of the Government of Namibia. Over five working days, the deployed APB team was able to help participants develop a general picture of the chemical emergency management capacity of Namibia and provided advice on how that capacity could be strengthened in line with the requirements of paragraph 4 of Article X of the Convention. The workshop was funded from the regular budget.

Regional planning workshop for Pacific Islands Forum Member States, Nadir, Fiji, 26 to 28 August 2019

46. This workshop focused on, inter alia, the development of national protection programmes to assist Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Member States in dealing with chemical emergencies. The fostering of regional networking and the development of a regional concept of operations to enhance chemical safety and security were discussed at the meeting. Furthermore, the meeting addressed the required means for

the development of effective PIF regional and national response to emergencies involving the use of chemicals as weapons.

47. Twenty representatives from seven PIF Member States participated in the workshop, which was funded from a voluntary contribution by the Government of Germany.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION – ARTICLE XI

Analytical chemistry course under the OPCW Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa on the Chemical Weapons Convention, Pretoria, South Africa, 13 to 24 May 2019

48. The 11th edition of the analytical chemistry course was held at Protechnik Laboratories, Pretoria, South Africa, from 13 to 24 May 2019. The course was intended for chemistry professionals from industry, government, and academia who are involved in the analysis, synthesis, or quality control of chemicals related to the Convention.
49. The course enabled 22 participants representing 20 States Parties from Africa to gain a sound working knowledge of gas-chromatography (GC) and gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (GC-MS) analysis principles and procedure so that they could develop a greater understanding and competence in the theoretical and practical relationships of the analytical techniques. The course was funded from the regular budget.

Analytical skills course in Spanish focusing on the analysis of chemicals related to the Chemical Weapons Convention, Madrid, Spain, 3 to 14 June 2019

50. The 10th edition of the course was intended to enhance the capacity of laboratories in the Latin America and Caribbean (GRULAC) region. The course programme enabled analytical chemists from the region to build and further improve their knowledge and skills on the theory and practice of the use of advanced analytical techniques, sample preparation, and interpretation of mass spectra of chemicals, as well as on other aspects related to the maintenance of laboratory equipment, quality assurance systems in chemical analysis, and procedures for participation in OPCW proficiency testing.
51. The course was attended by 15 participants from 12 States Parties from the GRULAC region, and was funded from the regular budget.

Seminar on the Chemical Weapons Convention and chemical safety and security management for States Parties in the Africa region, Algiers, Algeria, 23 to 25 June 2019

52. A seminar on the Convention and chemical safety and security management for States Parties in the Africa region was held in Algiers, Algeria, from 23 to 25 June 2019. The seminar was intended for experts from the National Authorities and relevant stakeholders dealing with chemical safety and security management and involved in the Responsible Care® programme. The seminar equipped participants with knowledge in the area of chemical safety and security management, including chemical safety and security risk assessment, scenario-based strategies, chemical threat assessment, vulnerability studies, and mitigation methods.

53. The seminar was attended by 27 participants from 10 African States Parties and was funded from the regular budget.

Symposium on women in chemistry, The Hague, the Netherlands, 24 June 2019

54. The fourth edition of the symposium on women in chemistry was held at OPCW Headquarters on 24 June 2019. The symposium provided participants with the opportunity to highlight the challenges and opportunities experienced by women working in chemistry-related fields. Participants also shared their experiences, particularly in the field of chemical safety and security management, as seen through the lenses of academia, the chemical industry, government agencies, and laboratories.
55. More than 60 participants from 45 States Parties attended the symposium, including representatives from government agencies, the scientific community, academia, the chemical industry, civil society, and students from high schools and universities. The symposium was funded from the regular budget, with a voluntary contribution by the Government of Canada.

Basic analytical chemistry course for women chemists, Rijswijk, the Netherlands, 25 to 28 June 2019

56. The fourth edition of the basic analytical chemistry course for women chemists took place in Rijswijk, the Netherlands, from 25 to 28 June 2019. The course was intended to assist qualified women analytical chemists from States Parties with economies that are developing or in transition in acquiring further knowledge and experience, specifically regarding analysis of chemicals related to the Convention and good laboratory practices and quality standards. The focus of the training was on GC-MS, the automated mass spectral deconvolution and identification system (AMDIS), the OPCW Central Analytical Database (OCAD), and techniques for the analysis of chemicals related to the Convention.
57. Ten participants from 10 States Parties attended the course, specifically from government laboratories, universities, and research institutes. The course was funded from the regular budget, with a voluntary contribution by the Government of Canada.

Review and evaluation workshop on the components of an agreed framework for the full implementation of Article XI, The Hague, the Netherlands, 1 July 2019

58. The review and evaluation workshop on the components of an agreed framework for the full implementation of Article XI, pursuant to decision C-16/DEC.10 (dated 1 December 2011) was held at OPCW Headquarters on 1 July 2019. The workshop proceedings included a thematic session and three group discussions on integrated chemicals management, enhancing laboratory capabilities, and the components of an agreed framework for the full implementation of Article XI, followed by a plenary session to review the outcomes of the discussions. The workshop led to the preparation by the facilitator, with the support of the Secretariat, of a paper listing ideas, lessons, and suggestions drawn from the presentations given and the statements and views expressed during the workshop. The list provides guidance to the Secretariat in developing future capacity-building programmes.

59. Sixty participants from 37 States Parties representing National Authorities, Permanent Representations, and relevant stakeholders participated in the workshop, which was funded from the regular budget.

Course for analytical chemists from laboratories supporting customs services, Rijswijk, the Netherlands, 8 to 12 July 2019

60. The second edition of the course for analytical chemists from laboratories supporting customs services was held at the OPCW Laboratory in Rijswijk, the Netherlands, from 8 to 12 July 2019.
61. The course equipped 10 participants from 10 States Parties with a sound working knowledge of the principles, procedures, and applications of GC-MS, portable GC-MS, Fourier transform infrared (FTIR) spectroscopy, and portable FTIR and RAMAN spectroscopy for the analysis of chemicals related to the Convention. In addition, the course provided practical knowledge on the AMDIS chemical software and on the OCAD for the identification of chemicals under the Convention. During the course, the participants also had the opportunity to visit the Dutch Customs Laboratory in Amsterdam. The course was funded from the regular budget.

Seminar on the Chemical Weapons Convention and chemical safety and security management, San José, Costa Rica, 15 to 18 July 2019

62. A seminar on the Convention and chemical safety and security management for States Parties in the GRULAC region was held in San José, Costa Rica, from 15 to 18 July 2019. The seminar was intended for experts from the National Authorities and relevant stakeholders dealing with chemical safety and security management and the Responsible Care® programme. The seminar equipped participants with knowledge in the areas of chemical transport security, inventory management, quantitative risk assessment, scenario-based strategies, chemical threat assessment and vulnerability studies, and mitigation methods.
63. The seminar was attended by 31 participants from 16 States Parties in the GRULAC region and was funded from the regular budget.

Associate Programme 2019, 26 July to 27 September 2019

64. The 20th edition of the OPCW's Associate Programme was launched on 26 July 2019 at the OPCW Headquarters in The Hague. The programme concluded on 27 September 2019. The main purpose of the programme is to raise participants' awareness and enhance their knowledge and skills in integrated chemicals management.
65. The programme curriculum combines lectures and exercises at the OPCW Headquarters in The Hague and specialised institutions in the Netherlands, a chemical engineering-oriented skills development course at the University of Surrey in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and industry attachments at chemical facilities in several States Parties. A total of 32 participants from 32 States Parties attended this edition of the programme. The Associate Programme is funded from the regular budget.

Programme for Support of Research Projects and the Fellowship Programme

66. The 31st Review Committee meeting on research projects took place on 26 July 2019. All new research project proposals were reviewed (both directly funded and co-funded by the OPCW and the International Foundation for Science).
67. In total, four directly funded projects (by Argentina, Brazil, India, and North Macedonia) and 15 co-funded projects were approved for funding. Additionally, five requests for support under the Programme for Support of Research Projects (from Argentina, Indonesia, Italy, Serbia, and Uruguay) were initiated, as were three new fellowships (a fellow from Argentina in Italy, from Kenya in Switzerland, and from Nigeria in South Africa). These programmes are funded from the regular budget.

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