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

Mr Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

1. I warmly welcome all delegations to the Ninety-Third Session of the Executive Council.
2. At the outset, I would like to thank Ambassador Andrea Perugini for his continuing able leadership of the Council.
3. We commence the first Council session of the year by recognising our achievements in 2019 and preparing for the challenges in the year ahead. Last year concluded with a historic moment. For the first time since the Convention's entry into force, the Conference of the States Parties, at its Twenty-Fourth Session, adopted two decisions to amend the schedules of chemicals listed in the Convention. This event demonstrates States Parties' determination to ensure that the Convention remains strong, relevant, and adaptable to new challenges.
4. States Parties were notified of the approval of these changes through a note verbale issued on 10 December (NV/ODG/221841/19, dated 10 December 2019). The Secretariat issued Note S/1820/2019 on 23 December 2019, containing the consolidated text of the adopted changes. The Secretariat issued a second Note on 14 January 2020 (S/1821/2019/Rev.1) to provide States Parties with guidance about the implementation of these decisions. These changes will enter into force for States Parties on 7 June 2020, following the timelines laid out in Article XV of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The Secretariat stands ready to assist States Parties and their National Authorities in the implementation of these decisions.
5. The Conference of the States Parties also approved the 2020 Programme and Budget. This budget will allow the Secretariat to implement its growing portfolio of mandated activities with no increase in State Party assessed contributions.
6. The Conference further approved a decision (C-24/DEC.11, dated 28 November 2019) to move to a biennial programme and budget cycle to support longer-term programmatic planning and organisational efficiency. This new approach reflects States Parties' intention to ensure that the OPCW has sufficient and sustainable resources to carry out its broad range of activities.



7. We will soon be moving into the 2021 Programme and Budget planning cycle. Again, the Organisation will face the challenge of delivering additional mandated activities under a zero nominal growth budget. The continued constraints of zero nominal growth have engendered a steady erosion of the OPCW's regular budget in real terms. In the last year, the Secretariat has incurred an unforeseen increase in staff costs. This increase resulted from changes to the United Nations salary scale for General Service staff, retroactive to 2017, as well as increases in October 2019 and February 2020 to the post adjustment multiplier for the Netherlands, from 31% to 40%, by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC). In 2020, these increases will result in a potential shortfall in staff costs of approximately EUR 5 million. The Secretariat has put temporary measures in place to mitigate the impact, but a sustainable solution is needed. These increases are mandatory. Should States Parties continue to maintain a zero nominal growth-based budget for 2021, the Secretariat will have to call on States Parties to choose among programmatic priorities in order to focus and adapt the Programme and Budget to this reality.
8. There are critical priorities, however, that demand immediate and sustained resources. As I have repeatedly highlighted to the Council, the Secretariat faces serious challenges with regard to cyberattacks. The Secretariat is the target of increasingly sophisticated and frequent attempts to penetrate and compromise its information systems. Any loss in the confidentiality, availability, or integrity of information of States Parties or the Secretariat as a result of a successful cyberattack would have serious impacts on the Organisation. I thank States Parties for their voluntary contributions to the trust fund that has been established for improvements in cybersecurity. This funding supports steady investments and improvements in cybersecurity. Despite this progress, the Secretariat has reached the limit of the gains that can be achieved with these resources. A sustainable cybersecurity programme, including modern and capable cyberdefence tools, is needed. This programme will require dedicated staff and regular budget funding beginning as soon as 2021. The next draft budget, to be presented to States Parties in July, will incorporate these elements for the States Parties to consider.
9. The security landscape is evolving and the Organisation must have the resources and capabilities to adapt. The OPCW will continue to intensify its focus on preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons and responding to emerging threats.
10. Yesterday's meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism examined the capability of the OPCW's Situation Centre to detect chemical terrorism incidents. It also focused on the international legal framework on countering chemical terrorism. Finally, it was an opportunity to strengthen our relationship with other international organisations, such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. A Note summarising the OPCW's contribution to global anti-terrorism efforts was made available to States Parties in advance of this session of the Council (EC-93/DG.10, dated 20 February 2020).
11. Achieving our long-term goal of preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons will depend on retaining and developing our technical capabilities. This represents a complex challenge, taking into account the high pace of progress observed in science

and technology. Knowledge management is an essential component of our efforts to ensure that core expertise is identified, developed, preserved, and effectively used.

12. Knowledge management, and other important matters relating to organisational governance, have been discussed in a very productive way under the leadership of Ambassador I Gusti Agung Wesaka Puja of Indonesia and Ambassador Agustín Vásquez Gómez of El Salvador. I thank both Ambassadors for giving the Secretariat the opportunity to present ongoing work in areas that are essential for the OPCW to remain fit for purpose.
13. I have repeatedly highlighted the importance I attach to gender balance and geographical diversity. With regard to the tenure policy, I wish to emphasise that the existing modalities at the OPCW are the most stringent ones compared to similar, other non-career organisations, such as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization and the International Atomic Energy Agency. Increased flexibility is needed to retain essential skills and experience. I therefore encourage delegations to further actively engage in the facilitation process, should the Council decide to extend it.
14. The ChemTech Centre project to upgrade our existing OPCW Laboratory and Equipment Store is central to the effort to keep the OPCW fit for purpose. It demonstrates the commitment of the OPCW to using science and technology to implement and uphold the Convention. Upgrading these facilities to a Centre for Chemistry and Technology will be critical to achieving our long-term goals in this regard.
15. To date, financial contributions and pledges totalling EUR 29.3 million have been received from almost 40 States Parties and the European Union, in addition to a personal contribution. I sincerely thank all contributors for your relevant political and financial support. This EUR 33.5 million project is scheduled for completion in 2022. This year will be dedicated to the design and tendering processes and completion of all necessary permitting.
16. An additional EUR 4.2 million will be needed by July 2020 to complete the project on time. The broad support received so far reflects its potential to generate tangible benefits for all States Parties. I renew my appeal to all States Parties from every geographical region to financially support this project, with pledges that suit their situation. A briefing on the status of the project will take place tomorrow. A Note outlining the significant progress that has been made on this project was released yesterday (S/1859/2020, dated 9 March 2020).
17. With regard to direct cooperation between States Parties and the Secretariat, a bilateral agreement on privileges and immunities between Cambodia and the OPCW entered into force on 4 March 2020. Experience has demonstrated the operational value of these agreements. I invite States Parties that have not yet concluded or ratified an agreement to do so at the earliest opportunity.

18. In July 2019, I authorised an investigation into possible breaches of confidentiality related to the investigation by the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) into allegations of the use of chemical weapons in Douma on 7 April 2018. On 6 February 2020, I briefed States Parties on the findings. The investigation determined that two individuals violated their obligations concerning the protection of confidential information, and that a breach of the OPCW's Code of Conduct had occurred. My statement and a report on these findings have been made available to States Parties and published on the OPCW's public website. At the briefing, I invited States Parties to address any questions on this matter to the Secretariat in writing. For the purposes of transparency, and consistent with the non-confidential nature of the briefing, the questions, along with the Secretariat's responses, have been circulated to all States Parties. The Secretariat is now taking actions to strengthen the confidentiality regime, including enhanced, mandatory training for all members of the Secretariat and an in-depth review of relevant internal legislation.
19. As was agreed following a request by States Parties during the July 2018 session of the Executive Council, the Secretariat has provided briefings to States Parties regarding the Syrian Arab Republic chemical dossier ahead of each regular session of the Council. The last briefing took place on 4 March, during which presentations were given on all related activities.
20. The Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) has been examining a number of incidents regarding allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. During the reporting period, the FFM has continued to analyse the information collected from its deployments in November and December 2019. The FFM is awaiting sample analysis results from the last deployments, is planning further deployments, and will report on the results in due course.
21. On 23 December 2019, the Secretariat sent a note verbale to the Russian Federation regarding an incident involving the alleged use of chemical weapons in Aleppo, the Syrian Arab Republic, on 24 November 2018. This note verbale requests access to samples, information, and witnesses that are highly relevant to the FFM's investigation. Studying all available information relating to allegations of use of chemical weapons in Syria is a paramount principle of the work of the FFM. The information reportedly in the possession of the Russian Federation should therefore be considered before a report on this incident is to be issued.
22. The Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) has also continued its work to clarify gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies arising from the Syrian Arab Republic's initial declaration on its chemical weapons programme and subsequent submissions. The twenty-third round of consultations, initially planned to begin on 11 February 2020, should take place after this session of the Executive Council. A note entitled "Report on the Work of the Declaration Assessment Team" (EC-93/HP/DG.1, dated 6 March 2020) has been made available to the Council.
23. The Secretariat remains committed to ensuring the full implementation of all declaration requirements and to assisting the Syrian Arab Republic in fulfilling its obligations under the Convention as well as the relevant decisions of the OPCW policy-making organs and resolutions of the United Nations Security Council. At present, considering all identified gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies, the

Secretariat remains unable to confirm that the Syrian Arab Republic has submitted a declaration that can be considered accurate and complete.

24. In accordance with Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, adopted on 11 November 2016, the Secretariat is preparing to conduct the seventh and eighth rounds of inspections at the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC). On 7 November 2019, the Syrian Arab Republic sent a note verbale with an explanation regarding the presence of a Schedule 2.B.04 chemical detected in a sample collected by the Secretariat during the third round of inspections at the Barzah SSRC facilities in November 2018. On 20 February, the Secretariat responded to this note verbale requesting additional information from the Syrian Arab Republic. The Secretariat will continue to engage with the Syrian National Authority to seek further clarification on these findings. The Council will be informed accordingly. Also pursuant to the same decision, and together with the Syrian National Authority and the United Nations Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS), the Secretariat continues to monitor the security situation at and around airfields in Hama (Hama airbase) and Latakia (Humaymim airbase) to deploy a team as soon conditions allow.
25. The Conference of the States Parties at its Fourth Special Session adopted a decision entitled “Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use” (C-SS-4/DEC.3, dated 27 June 2018). In accordance with paragraph 24 of that decision, I have provided my latest report to the Executive Council (EC-93/DG.11, dated 24 February 2020).
26. The Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) continued to conduct its investigations, reached out to States Parties requesting their cooperation, and is in the process of concluding its work on the first three incidents under investigation. Consistent with decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 adopted by the Conference at its Fourth Special Session, the Secretariat will provide a report on the investigations to the Executive Council and the United Nations Secretary-General in the forthcoming weeks.
27. The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) continues to provide support to the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic in accordance with the Tripartite Agreement concluded between the OPCW, UNOPS, and the Syrian Arab Republic. This agreement facilitates the Secretariat’s mandated activities in the Syrian Arab Republic, including the deployments of the FFM and DAT, and inspections of the Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC) facilities. A meeting of the Steering Committee to discuss the next extension of the Tripartite Agreement took place on 5 and 6 February 2020 in Damascus. An agreement to a further six-month extension until 30 September 2020 is now being finalised.
28. Pursuant to Council decision EC-M-43/DEC.1, dated 24 July 2014, regarding the destruction and verification of 12 declared chemical weapons production facilities, the Secretariat has been monitoring and maintaining the remote monitoring systems installed at four sealed underground structures on the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic. In line with the Council decision, the mandate related to those activities will come to an end in the coming days, in March 2020. As a result, the Secretariat is currently planning for the removal of the monitoring equipment from these four underground structures.

29. Turning to destruction, as at 29 February 2020, the Secretariat had verified the destruction by possessor States Parties of 70,668 metric tonnes (MT), or 97.7%, of all declared chemical weapons.
30. As at the same date, the Secretariat had verified the destruction by the United States of America of 26,133 MT, or 94.11%, of its Category 1 chemical weapons stockpile. The United States of America plans to complete the destruction of the remaining 5.89% of its stockpile by no later than 2023.
31. In Libya, the project to clean up the former chemical weapons site in Ruwagha was completed on 26 January, as confirmed by the Libyan National Authority.
32. China and Japan have continued to make progress on the excavation, recovery, and destruction of abandoned chemical weapons (ACW) at various sites in China. As at 31 December 2019, around 83,650 items of ACW had been recovered, of which 57,701 had been destroyed.
33. A fifth phase of the OPCW Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa on the Chemical Weapons Convention—commonly known as the “Africa Programme”—has been launched for the period from 2020 to 2022. Following extensive consultations with African States Parties, the programme includes tailor-made activities in line with the region’s needs. It features unique innovations aimed at securing greater engagement, ownership, and sustainability of its impact at the national, subregional, and regional levels.
34. As all of you are aware, the World Health Organization declared the outbreak of the novel coronavirus—COVID-19—a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on 30 January 2020. Prior to this declaration, I established an internal Task Force chaired by the Deputy Director-General and composed of representatives from across the Secretariat to monitor this situation. The Inspectorate and Verification Divisions have been working to identify mitigating measures to ensure the implementation of the inspection plan for 2020, with minimal operational and budgetary impact. At this time, any postponement of deployments is not expected to affect the implementation of the annual inspection plan. However, considering the current evolution of the situation, it can be expected that adjustments may be needed. Such adjustments may present challenges to completing all 241 Article VI inspections in 2020. I will communicate any such decisions in a timely manner to the Executive Council and all relevant stakeholders.
35. The International Cooperation and Assistance Division (ICA) also adopted certain measures with regard to the annual work plan, already prepared in collaboration with States Parties that have agreed to jointly host capacity-building events with the Secretariat, which will be adjusted according to the evolution of the COVID-19 situation. ICA has and will continue to further engage with hosting States Parties in the lead-up to planned activities. Participants and their National Authorities will be apprised of any changes to the schedule or other necessary measures.
36. The health and safety of all OPCW staff is paramount, both at OPCW Headquarters and on duty travel around the world. The Secretariat will continue to monitor the situation and take all reasonable measures to protect our staff, while minimising the

impact of the outbreak on the implementation of the OPCW's programme in 2020. I will report again on this matter at the Ninety-Fourth Session of the Council.

37. Before I conclude my remarks, I would like to inform the Council of the passing away of one of our colleagues. On 8 February, while on mission, one of our colleagues sadly passed away of natural causes. I thank the States Parties and all international institutions that provided support and assistance to the Secretariat and to our colleague's family during this difficult time.

Chemical demilitarisation and verification

United States of America

38. The United States of America has two remaining chemical destruction facility sites: the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (PCAPP) in Colorado, and the Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (BGCAPP) in Kentucky.
39. The destruction operations at the PCAPP main plant are ongoing. Three static detonation chambers (SDCs) are being installed in order to expedite the destruction operations at this facility. The destruction operations at the BGCAPP main plant began on 17 January 2020. The destruction operations at the BGCAPP SDC are ongoing.

Abandoned chemical weapons

40. China and Japan have continued to make progress on the excavation, recovery, and destruction of abandoned chemical weapons (ACW) at various sites in China. At the Haerbaling and Harbin ACW destruction sites, the Secretariat carried out follow-up inspections of operations. As at 31 January 2020, a total of 19,189 ACW items have been destroyed at these sites.

Old chemical weapons

41. During the intersessional period, two inspections were conducted at old chemical weapons (OCW) sites in Italy and in the Netherlands. While destruction operations concerning OCWs have made considerable progress, recoveries continue to be made.

Declarations

42. Regarding the submission of initial declarations, only one State Party, Tonga, has yet to submit declarations under both Article III and Article VI of the Convention.
43. The deadline for the submission of annual declarations on past activities (ADPA) related to Article VI of the Convention 2019 is 30 March 2020. I encourage States Parties to continue to provide timely and accurate declarations to the Secretariat.
44. A presentation will be provided on amendments and correspondence received by the Secretariat regarding Article III declarations during this session of the Council.

Electronic Declarations Information System

45. The Secretariat has released the new Electronic Declarations Information System (EDIS). This release is a major step towards the digitalisation of Article III and Article VI declarations. I strongly encourage all States Parties to use EDIS, as a means to achieving a more effective and efficient declaration preparation and submission process.

Article VI inspections

46. The Inspectorate Division has developed and tested a new digital signature tool to improve the preparation of reports during Article VI inspections. This tool has been tested in inspections in five States Parties and has proved effective. I would like to thank those States Parties that participated in the testing. The Secretariat will soon submit the tool for approval by States Parties. The use of this tool will be discussed on a case-by-case basis with the State Party to be inspected.
47. The Secretariat continues to review its sampling and analysis capabilities for Article VI inspections. New commercial, off-the-shelf equipment is being evaluated for future use. The Secretariat is also studying developments in analytical instrumentation.
48. I would like to thank those States Parties that accept inter- and intracountry sequential inspections and I encourage all States Parties that have declared Article VI facilities to consent to both combinations.
49. The Inspectorate Division's training programme on the "Production of Scheduled Chemicals and Verifying the Absence of Schedule 1 Chemicals" is being updated to incorporate the new Schedule 1 chemicals. Training materials will include postulated routes of synthesis, methods of synthesis, and precursor materials, all of which are required to verify the absence of Schedule 1 chemicals during inspections.

Inspector training

50. During the reporting period, the Capacity Building and Contingency Planning Cell (CBCP) of the Inspectorate Division provided, coordinated, or participated in 13 training courses. The courses comprised 480 inspector/trainee days and 41 instructor days, and included a total of 173 participants.
51. On 28 November 2019, mock inspection training was conducted for chemical production technologists and analytical chemists from Inspector Group R in Rotterdam, the Netherlands.
52. From 2 to 5 December 2019, mock inspection training was held for chemical weapon munition specialists and health and safety specialists in Munster, Germany.
53. From 9 to 13 December 2019, a private company from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland delivered at OPCW Headquarters a course from the National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health.

54. From 9 to 16 December 2019, a radiation protection course for future non-destructive evaluation specialists was delivered by the Delft University of Technology.
55. On 17 December 2019, the Inspectorate Division delivered a course on chemical release risk assessment at OPCW Headquarters to staff from the Inspectorate and Verification Divisions.
56. From 6 to 31 January 2020, three new analytical chemist inspectors from Inspector Group R participated in the analytical chemist certification course at the OPCW Laboratory and Equipment Store.
57. On 17 January 2020, the Inspectorate Division delivered an indoor and outdoor chemical cloud dispersion course at OPCW Headquarters to staff from the Inspectorate and Verification Divisions.
58. From 27 January to 14 February 2020, a health and safety specialist from Inspector Group R participated in an offshore medic course, conducted at Nottingham University Hospital in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
59. From 5 to 7 February 2020, two first aid courses for inspectors were delivered by the Red Cross at OPCW Headquarters.
60. On 10 and 11 February 2020, an explosive remnants of war training course, with elements of investigation of alleged use, was conducted at the Royal Netherlands Explosive Ordnance Disposal College in Soesterberg, the Netherlands.
61. On 12 and 13 February 2020, the United States of America provided two refresher course sessions on Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER), which are mandatory for individuals that are working in Chemical Weapons Destruction Facilities (CWDFs) in the United States of America.
62. From 17 to 21 February 2020, the Inspectorate Division conducted a mandatory in-house Schedule 1 chemistry course.
63. From 2 to 6 March 2020, chemical weapons munitions specialist instructors held non-destructive evaluation training at the OPCW Laboratory and Equipment Store.
64. I would like to thank Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America for the technical and in-kind support provided during the reporting period for these training modules for inspectors.

Enterprise Content Management System

65. The first records have been registered in the Enterprise Content Management (ECM) System. The Secretariat is now continuing with phase two of the ECM system development, which is focused on adding functionalities to support specific business activities. The ECM system will improve the management of information and streamline verification business processes and other OPCW activities involving classified information.

The OPCW Laboratory

66. The OPCW Laboratory completed the Forty-Fifth Proficiency Test, as well as the Fourth Biomedical Proficiency Test. The results of both tests were shared with States Parties. The Forty-Sixth Proficiency Test and the fourth exercise for the analysis of biotoxins are ongoing. The Fifth Biomedical Proficiency Test began in February 2020.
67. The network of designated laboratories remains critical for OPCW activities. Twenty-two laboratories from 18 States Parties are designated for the analysis of environmental samples, and 17 laboratories from 12 States Parties are designated for the analysis of biomedical samples.
68. States Parties were informed of the release of Version 22_2020 of the OPCW Central Analytical Database (OCAD) on 10 January (S/1822/2020, dated 10 January 2020). As approved by the Council at its Ninety-First Session, the OCAD has been updated with data on scheduled chemicals (EC-91/DEC.2, dated 11 July 2019), as well as with data on non-scheduled chemicals relevant to the Chemical Weapons Convention (EC-91/DEC.1, dated 11 July 2019). States Parties are invited to contribute data to strengthen the OCAD, particularly data related to the scheduled compounds added to the Annex on Chemicals in accordance with the two decisions adopted by the Conference of the States Parties at its Twenty-Fourth Session (C-24/DEC.4 and C-24/DEC.5, both dated 27 November 2019).

International cooperation and assistance

Implementation support

69. A visit to France by representatives of the National Authority of Côte d'Ivoire was conducted from 2 to 6 December 2019 under the Mentorship/Partnership Programme between France and Côte d'Ivoire. The visit provided the participants with insights into the national implementation of the Convention, as well as an opportunity to share experiences and best practices. A visit by France to Côte d'Ivoire will be conducted in 2020.
70. The Secretariat held a lessons-learned workshop on the Mentorship/Partnership Programme at the OPCW Headquarters on 30 and 31 January 2020. Its purpose was to review and assess the impact of the programme, share best practices, and discuss measures to enhance the Programme's effectiveness. The event was attended by representatives of 16 States Parties who had previously participated in the Programme. The outcomes and recommendations are being further considered by the Secretariat to inform and strengthen the future implementation of the Programme.
71. A global stakeholders' forum on the adoption of national implementing legislation was held at the OPCW Headquarters from 3 to 5 December 2019. It aimed at enhancing stakeholders' awareness of their obligations under the Convention and their respective roles in the legislative adoption process. It also provided an opportunity to update national road maps on the process of adopting national implementing legislation. At the end of the event, participants committed to undertake specific actions to move forward the process of adopting legislation and developed key messages to convey to high-level decision-makers on the importance of national

implementation of the Convention. Forty participants from 12 States Parties participated in the event.

Assistance and protection

72. The Secretariat conducted a number of capacity-building activities aimed at fostering national and regional capacity to respond to the use or threat of use of chemical weapons, in line with the provisions of Article X of the Convention.
73. The 2019 training cycle for Asia was concluded in Singapore in December. Under the training cycle for 2020, a new international basic course on emergency response to chemical incidents for Arabic-speaking States Parties started this week in Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates.
74. An international medical course on pre-hospital care for victims of chemical incidents was held from 17 to 20 February 2020 in Doha, Qatar.
75. The Secretariat also continued to provide training opportunities for emergency management personnel. To this end, a regional table-top exercise for first responders from Latin America and the Caribbean was held from 17 to 21 February 2020 in Quito, Ecuador.
76. I once again thank donors, as well as hosting and participating States Parties, for their valuable contributions to our assistance and protection capacity-building programmes. I continue to encourage States Parties to contribute to the voluntary trust fund that was established in the context of the International Support Network for Victims of Chemical Weapons by the Conference of the States Parties at its Sixteenth Session (C-16/DEC.13, dated 2 December 2011).

International cooperation

77. The Secretariat organised a course on analytical skills development at the Indian Institute of Chemical Technology (IICT), in Hyderabad, India, from 25 November to 6 December 2019. The course was attended by 20 participants from 19 States Parties.
78. The second edition of the “Workshop on Developing Tools on Chemical Safety and Security Management” was organised at Almaty, Kazakhstan from 2 to 6 December 2019. Twenty-one representatives from international and regional organisations, government agencies, chemical industries, and academia participated in the workshop.
79. From 3 to 5 December 2019, the Secretariat organised a seminar on chemical safety and security management for States Parties in the Asia region in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The seminar was attended by 17 participants from nine States Parties.
80. From 16 to 20 December 2019, a training workshop on developing best practices for the Responsible Care® programme was organised in Moscow, the Russian Federation. Eleven participants from five States Parties attended the workshop.
81. From 4 to 6 February 2020, the Secretariat organised a seminar on chemical safety and security management for States Parties in the Asia region at the Doha Regional

Centre for CBRN Training in Doha, Qatar. Twenty-three participants from 12 States Parties attended the seminar.

82. During the reporting period, three fellowships were completed under the Fellowship Programme. Currently, six fellowships are ongoing. Under the Conference Support Programme, 24 participants were sponsored by the Secretariat to attend six conferences in five States Parties, namely Argentina, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Malta, and South Africa.

The OPCW Africa Programme

83. The fifth phase of the OPCW Africa Programme has been launched for the period from 2020 to 2022. Following a wide and inclusive consultative process conducted by the Secretariat with the African States Parties in 2019, a tailor-made concept for the fifth phase was developed. A Note (EC-93/DG.9, dated 18 February 2020) on the Africa Programme, has been submitted for the consideration of the Council at this session.

Chemical industry

Growth of Schedule 2 industries

84. In advance of the Industry Cluster meeting, which was scheduled for 9 March, the Secretariat identified trends related to the growing number of declared Schedule 2 plant sites.
85. As a result of this growth, it has become increasingly difficult to maintain the frequency of inspections at Schedule 2 plant sites that would be recommended by the risk assessments of initial inspections (according to paragraph 18 of Part VII of the Verification Annex).
86. In order to regain the desired inspection frequency and plan for the expected number of newly declared Schedule 2 plant sites in the coming years, the draft Programme and Budget for 2021 may request a modest increase to the number of Schedule 2 inspections.
87. Any such request for an increased number of Schedule 2 inspections would be offset by a corresponding reduction in the number of inspections at other chemical production facilities.
88. The Secretariat will continue to monitor the growth of these plant sites and report back to the Council through the Industry Cluster.

Cooperation with chemical industry

89. The Secretariat is preparing an exchange of letters with the International Chemical Trade Association (ICTA) with a view to establishing a formal partnership, as the OPCW has done with the International Council of Chemical Associations (ICCA). ICTA can be a valuable partner to the OPCW, through sharing its chemical security expertise and informing the OPCW's capacity-building activities. Moreover, given the growth in the global trade of chemicals, ICTA can also facilitate outreach to

chemical distributors to sensitise them about the challenges posed by the misuse of toxic chemicals. Closer engagement with ICTA would be in line with the relevant recommendations of the Third Review Conference and the Organisation's changing focus to the prevention of the re-emergence of chemical weapons.

90. On the basis of the exchange of letters, ICTA will be invited to join the meetings of the "Chemical Industry Coordination Group", and the annual sessions of the Conference of the States Parties to complement the voice of the chemical industry currently represented by ICCA.

External Relations

91. During the intersessional period, the OPCW welcomed eight new Permanent Representatives to the OPCW, who have presented their credentials—from Croatia, Colombia, Ecuador, Libya, Myanmar, the Republic of Korea, Serbia, and Slovakia.
92. During the same period, I met with a number of dignitaries at the OPCW Headquarters, including: H.E. Mr Rüdiger Bohn, Deputy Federal Government Commissioner for Disarmament and Arms Control of Germany; H.E. Mr Gholamhossein Dehghani, Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran; H.E. Mr Pekka Haavisto, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Finland; H.E. Dr Riyad al-Maliki, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Palestine; the Hon. Mr Dennis Moses, Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago; H.E. Mr Henk Swarttouw, Ambassador for International Organisations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands; H.E. Ms Sylvie Lucas, Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of Luxembourg; H.E. Mr Axel Kenes, Political Director and Director General for Multilateral Affairs and Globalisation of the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and Mr Thomas DiNanno, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Defense Policy, Emerging Threats and Outreach of the United States of America.
93. A record number of 62 civil society organisations represented by 137 individuals participated in the Twenty-Fourth Session of the Conference of the States Parties. Fifteen civil society representatives delivered statements during the general debate.

Administration and finance

94. As indicated in the monthly financial situation report (S/1853/2020, dated 24 February 2020), the closing cash balance at 31 December 2020 is forecast to be negative. Based upon this forecast and taking into account experience from both 2018 and 2019, with a higher than normal proportion of assessed contributions and arrears payments occurring in the later part of the year, it is anticipated that the Working Capital Fund (WCF) will need to be utilised in order to maintain liquidity in 2020. The Secretariat continues to take measures to address the financial situation. These measures include reminding States Parties of their pending outstanding balances, closely monitoring the implementation of the Programme and Budget for 2020, improving the robustness of the WCF, and using trust fund resources wherever appropriate.

Knowledge management

95. As a knowledge-based organisation, the OPCW relies on the expertise and knowledge of its staff. The retention and management of this knowledge plays a paramount role in achieving our goals. The knowledge management team has continued its work to implement key elements of this strategy, such as staff knowledge profiles, knowledge sharing activities, and knowledge transfer interviews, focusing on core areas relevant to knowledge in chemical weapons.

Human capital management

96. The two final elements of the human resources component of the enterprise resource planning system (ERP) project have been implemented. The learning and development module went live in January this year and the performance management module went live in February.
97. The Secretariat continues to develop the use of data to improve staff engagement, management, and performance. In this regard, the Secretariat has implemented a modern dashboard and reporting platform to support data-driven decision making within human resources.

Information technology

98. The OPCW has recently launched a new online system for managing the complete life cycle of Official Series Documents. The system allows for improved collaboration across the Secretariat during document creation, and a robust repository for managing and sharing documents with OPCW stakeholders.