NOTE BY THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT

ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION OF ANNUAL DECLARATIONS ON PAST ACTIVITIES AS AT 31 MAY 2020

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1. The Declarations Handbook provides guidance for the preparation and submission of declarations by States Parties to the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter "the Secretariat"), including the submission of electronic declarations.[1] This improves declaration information-gathering activities and the efficiency of processing such data within the Secretariat's Verification Information System (VIS).

2. The Electronic Declarations Tool for National Authorities (EDNA) was developed by the Secretariat and released in 2008 for use by States Parties for the preparation of Article VI declarations. The most current version (3.3.1) has been available since January 2018.

3. In February 2020, the Secretariat released the Electronic Declaration Information System (EDIS) for the preparation of Article VI and Article III declarations. EDIS, a modern web application with various new features (including those requested by States Parties), will serve as a replacement for EDNA.

4. This Note presents an updated overview of the status of the submission of annual declarations on past activities (ADPA) in electronic format. The first in the series of such updates was a Note by the Secretariat in 2009 (S/773/2009, dated 18 June 2009).

DECLARATIONS RECEIVED IN ELECTRONIC FORMAT

5. As at 31 May 2020, ADPAs for 2019 had been submitted by 82 States Parties, including 10 "nil declarations".[2] Of the 72 declarations that were required to be processed, 47 declarations (65%) were submitted, fully or partially, in electronic format.[3] Thirty-eight of these were prepared using EDNA, and four using EDIS. In total, 94% of all declared plant sites and facilities were declared in electronic format. These details are further outlined in the figure below.
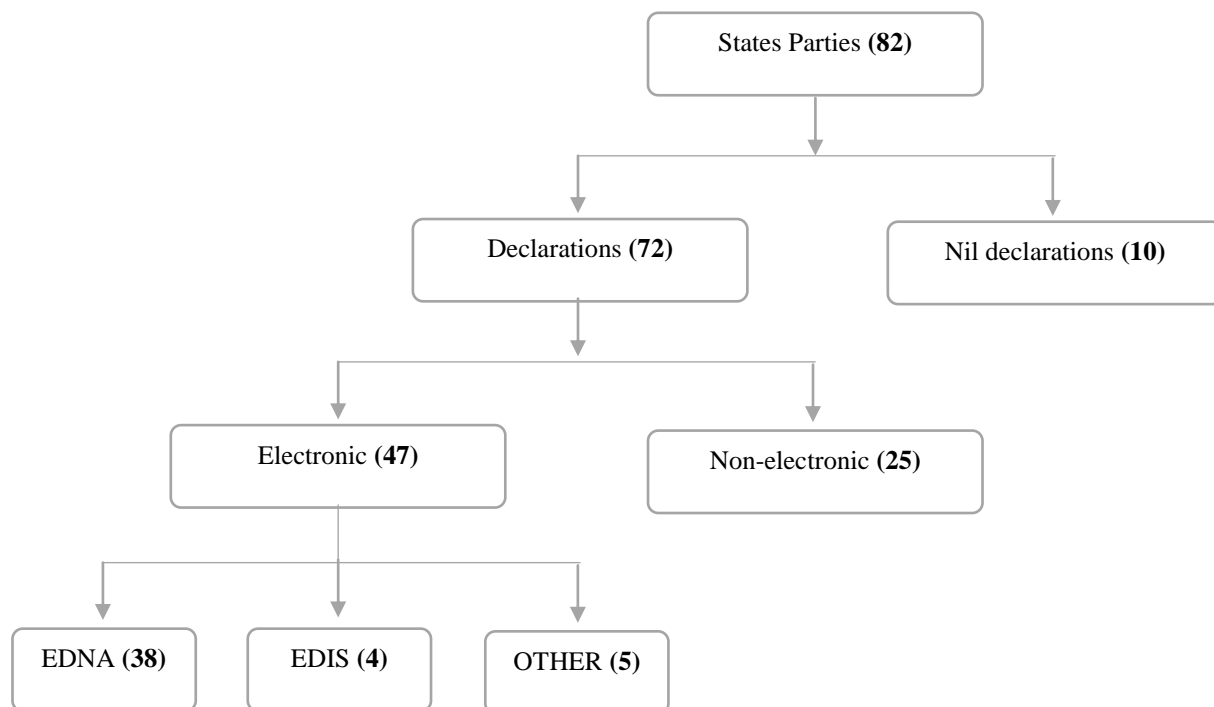
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[1] The Declarations Handbook 2013, Section A, paragraph 3.3.

[2] When States Parties voluntarily notify the Secretariat that they have no declarable activities, these submissions are referred to as "nil declarations".

[3] Only declarations that include electronic XML files are counted as electronic declarations.

FIGURE: BREAKDOWN OF ADPA 2019 DECLARATIONS BY MEANS OF TRANSMISSION TO THE SECRETARIAT

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                        ┌─────────────────────┐
                        │  States Parties (82) │
                        └─────────────────────┘
                    ┌───────────┴────────────┐
          ┌──────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────────┐
          │ Declarations (72)│      │ Nil declarations (10)│
          └──────────────────┘      └──────────────────────┘
          ┌──────┴────────┐
  ┌────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────┐
  │ Electronic (47)│   │ Non-electronic (25)  │
  └────────────────┘   └──────────────────────┘
   ┌──────┼───────┐
┌──────────┐ ┌──────────┐ ┌──────────┐
│ EDNA (38)│ │ EDIS (4) │ │ OTHER (5)│
└──────────┘ └──────────┘ └──────────┘
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6.   As at 31 May 2020, 24 Schedule 1 facilities had been declared in ADPA 2019 submitted by 21 States Parties. Of these 21 declarations, 11 contained information submitted in electronic format, 10 of which had been prepared using the EDNA reporting tool. Of the 24 Schedule 1 facilities that had been declared in ADPA 2019, 13 were declared electronically.

PROCESSING ELECTRONIC DECLARATIONS

7.   The Secretariat has worked with the States Parties concerned to resolve any technical problems which they encountered when submitting electronic declarations. While some technical problems can be resolved by the Secretariat, successful implementation of electronic declarations also depends on States Parties closely following the relevant protocols and guidelines that have been issued by the Secretariat.[4]

8.   Some States Parties that submit electronic declarations also submit hard copies of that declaration, which they describe as the "authoritative" version. This requires the Secretariat to cross-check the data contained in the electronic version against the hard copy "authoritative" version. It is therefore recommended that, whenever possible, States Parties submit their formal declarations in electronic format, thus eliminating the need for a hard copy.

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[4]   Available on the OPCW external server (https://external.opcw.org/) under EDIS documents.

SUMMARY

9. The wide adoption and continuous improvement of EDNA over the past 12 years as well as the introduction of its successor tool, EDIS, combined with support and training, has led to an increase in the number of States Parties submitting declarations in electronic format.

10. The Secretariat welcomes the increased use of electronic tools for the submission of declarations, and encourages those States Parties which have yet to use such tools to consider the benefits of adopting the new system, EDIS. These benefits include enhanced efficiencies for States Parties in the preparation of declarations, especially since industry representatives are now also able to use EDIS and to provide information to National Authorities electronically.

11. For any questions regarding EDNA, EDIS, or electronic declarations, States Parties are invited to contact the Declarations Branch of the Verification Division by email via its dedicated email addresses (darq@opcw.org for EDNA, and edis@opcw.org for EDIS).

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