



**REPORT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR MR VUSIMUZI PHILEMON MADONSELA
CHAIRPERSON OF THE OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON TERRORISM
TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AT ITS NINETY-FIFTH SESSION**

1. Mr Chairperson, Director-General, distinguished colleagues, it is my pleasure to provide a short oral report on the meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism (OEWG-T) held on 2 October 2020.
2. That was my first meeting of the working group over which I had the distinct privilege to preside as Chair. Therefore, I would like to first start by thanking my predecessor, H.E. Ambassador Ngofa of Nigeria, for his leadership as Chair of the Working Group over the past three years. I would also like to thank the Executive Council for placing me in a position of trust to shepherd the work of the OEWG-T, in return for which I undertake to labour unremittingly to repay such trust. Finally, I would like to thank all delegates who took part in the meeting, on which occasion, for the first time, the Working Group experimented with an online format.
3. Under my chairpersonship, I intend to continue the Working Group's focus on the implementation of the Executive Council's decision on non-State actors (EC-86/DEC.9, dated 13 October 2017). To that end, our meeting last week focused on inter-agency capacity-building efforts in preventing and responding to acts of chemical terrorism, and in particular, on the key role of the United Nations. Through presentations from the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), the meeting aimed to explore the role of the UNOCT in supporting the efforts of Member States to counter CBRN terrorism and in the overall strengthening of coordination across the United Nations system.
4. In his opening remarks, the Director-General emphasised the long-standing relationship between the OPCW and the United Nations, which was established by the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter "the Convention") itself. He highlighted the key pillars of cooperation in the counter-terrorism field, particularly through the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Compact and its Working Group on Emerging Threats and Critical Infrastructure Protection, of which the OPCW is a Vice-Chair. He observed that the OPCW's capacity-building programmes increasingly seek to support States Parties' actions to counter the threat of chemical terrorism through their implementation of the Convention, and noted that useful synergies with UNOCT may be found in this area.



5. The working group was then briefed by Mr Ulrik Ahnfeldt-Mollerup, Chief of the Counter-Terrorism Section at the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre within UNOCT, and Ms Maria-Eugenia Rettori, ead of the Unit on Preventing and Responding to Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) or CBRN¹ Terrorism. Mr Ahnfeldt-Mollerup outlined UNOCT's mandate and objectives, and introduced the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, launched by the United Nations Secretary-General in December 2018. Ms Rettori briefed the Group on UNOCT's work with Member States, international organisations, and United Nations entities to prevent, prepare for, and respond to terrorist attacks involving WMD or CBRN materials. Ms Rettori shared upcoming capacity-building courses to be offered in 2021 to Member States, and expressed the office's willingness to work more closely with the OPCW in that area.
6. Following the UNOCT presentations, questions and comments from delegations covered a range of topics, including the United Nations' role in responding to CBRN attacks, country-specific capacity-building projects, cooperation with regional organisations, legislative support, and the technology and security aspects of chemical terrorism. There was a rich exchange of ideas which, in my view, demonstrated the excellent potential to strengthen the partnership between the OPCW and the UNOCT.
7. At the end of the meeting, under the item "Any other business", the Working Group took note of a statement delivered by the delegate of the Syrian Arab Republic on matters related to countering chemical terrorism in that country.
8. I take this opportunity to express my profound appreciation to the delegates and to our expert presenters, Ms Rettori and Mr Ahnfeldt-Mollerup, for their participation and presentations. I believe the meeting was very constructive, and I am of the firm view that the OEWG-T has good potential to make an even greater contribution to the policy and technical work of this Organisation. To that end, before the next meeting of the Working Group, it is my intention to consult with a number of colleagues—including the facilitators on capacity-building issues—on how to ensure that our work is even more coordinated and action-oriented.
9. The next meeting of the OEWG-T is scheduled to take place prior to the Ninety-Sixth Session of the Executive Council. The date and modalities of the meeting will be communicated closer to the time.
10. Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

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