OPCW

NOTE BY THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT

STATUS REPORT ON THE VERIFICATION INFORMATION SYSTEM

Introduction

1. The Verification Information System (VIS) is the information system that has been developed by the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter "the Secretariat") to manage all verification-related information and to support verification activities.

2. The concept for the development of the VIS was presented by the Director-General in a Note to the Executive Council (hereinafter "the Council") at its Fortieth Session (EC-40/S/2, dated 27 January 2005). The Secretariat provides regular updates to the Council on the status of the development of the VIS.[1]

Status of the Verification Information System

3. The VIS is the key business-enabling technology platform that supports the Secretariat's verification activities. With a view to streamlining and supporting verification business processes more effectively and increasing the Secretariat's analytical capabilities, the VIS is continually being improved.

4. In 2020, the Secretariat initiated the VIS-Industry modernisation project. The activities carried out in 2020 included analysis of the existing platform, exhaustive documentation of system functionalities, design of the new architecture, and preparation of a project plan for the detailed software development activities, which are expected to start in the second quarter of 2021.

5. Regarding the progress of the verification analytics project for advanced data analytics, the Verification Division continued the delivery of interactive dashboards (18 in total) in 2020, using the Qlik Sense data analytics tool integrated with the Verification Data Warehouse. These dashboards focus on data related to Article III and VI declarations and to plant site selection.

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[1] The updates are contained in the following Notes issued by the Secretariat: EC-42/S/3 (dated 2 September 2005); EC-51/S/2 (dated 20 November 2007); EC-55/S/3 (dated 30 January 2009); EC-59/S/3 (dated 1 February 2010); EC-63/S/4 (dated 20 January 2011); EC-67/S/2 (dated 25 January 2012); EC-71/S/1 (dated 16 January 2013); EC-75/S/4 (dated 15 January 2014); EC-78/S/1 (dated 7 January 2015); EC-81/S/2 (dated 12 January 2016); EC-84/S/2 (dated 13 January 2017); EC-87/S/3 (dated 24 January 2018); EC-90/S/1 (dated 18 January 2019); and EC-93/S/3 (dated 31 January 2020).

6.   In 2020, the Secretariat continued with the implementation of the enterprise content management (ECM) system in the second phase of the project. The system is intended to improve the management of information and to streamline business processes related to verification and other OPCW activities involving classified information. Work continues to support further business processes, including declarations management, and to migrate records from legacy systems. The ECM system is intended to bring about a paradigm shift in terms of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the verification regime throughout the OPCW.

Electronic declarations and Secure Information Exchange

7.   In the year under review, 48 States Parties submitted their declarations in electronic format. Thirty-eight States Parties used the Electronic Declarations Tool for National Authorities (EDNA) and five States Parties used the new Electronic Declaration Information System (EDIS) for the preparation and submission of annual declarations on past activities for 2019. In 2020, the Secretariat discontinued EDNA training and instead provided training on EDIS in a virtual conference setting due to the outbreak of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

8.   EDIS was officially released in February 2020. The first release of the system included all of the existing EDNA features, with the addition of new functionalities enabling distributed use of the system, Article III riot control agent declarations, and Secure Information Exchange (SIX) system user management. Following the release, EDIS development efforts continued in 2020 and focused on digitising declarations and reports of old chemical weapons.

9.   In 2020, the Secretariat observed an increase in the use of SIX by States Parties. This may well have been a consequence of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on reducing the need for in-person delivery and receipt of documents or correspondence. SIX was first made available to States Parties in July 2014, as reported in the Secretariat's Note S/1192/2014 (dated 1 July 2014). By the end of 2020, 60 States Parties had registered to use the system, in comparison to 59 States Parties at the end of 2019. The Secretariat conducted several virtual bilateral meetings with representatives of States Parties to assist with the registration process and to continue the promotion of the system.

10.   The Secretariat deployed the new SIX portal in May 2020. This new platform further improves the security and user friendliness of the system and is now integrated into the new OPCW login portal, which centralises access to OPCW resources for States Parties. This is an example of the Secretariat's efforts to ensure that the SIX system continues to evolve and better meet its intended purpose.

Further information

11.   The Secretariat will continue to report on the VIS, focusing on key developments such as EDIS, the revamping of the VIS-Industry application, developments with regard to SIX, and enhanced data analytics capabilities.

12.   Information on the VIS, EDNA, EDIS, and SIX can also be found on the OPCW external server, which is updated periodically. Questions about the VIS and EDNA can also be sent to a dedicated email address (vis@opcw.org). Questions regarding EDIS

can be sent to the new dedicated address (edis@opcw.org). Questions concerning SIX can be sent to the dedicated address for that system (six@opcw.org). Interested States Parties can also make enquiries by calling the OPCW central telephone number (+31 (0)70 416 3000) and asking for the EDNA, EDIS or SIX help desk.

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