



NOTE BY THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT

**UPDATE ON EVENTS ORGANISED BY THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT
IN THE AREA OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE
JANUARY – APRIL 2021**

INTRODUCTION

1. The aim of this Note is to provide the Member States 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 Member States’ 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 January to 30 April 2021.

IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT – ARTICLE VII

National Legislative Review Forum, online, 23 February 2021

2. The Secretariat conducted a national legislative review forum with the National Authority of Mauritania on 23 February 2021. Participants completed a preparatory online training course prior to a live session with the Secretariat. Together with delegates from the State Party, the Secretariat reviewed the scope of Mauritania’s national legislative framework related to the Convention and discussed their legislative and regulatory approaches to Convention implementation.

Training Course on Fulfilling Declarations and Inspection Obligations Under Article VI of the Convention, online, 1 March – 15 April 2021

3. An online training course on fulfilling declarations and inspection obligations under Article VI of the Convention was held from 1 March to 15 April 2021. The training course comprised two live sessions which focused on identifying declarable activities and preparing relevant reports. A mock inspection was also conducted.
4. Fifty-two participants from 29 States Parties from all regional groups took part in the training course.



Training Course on Legislative and Regulatory Issues on Chemical Security, online, 19 – 22 April 2021

5. The Secretariat conducted an online training course on legislative and regulatory issues on chemical security from 19 to 22 April 2021. The course aimed to enhance the capacities of participants from African States Parties to analyse their national legal and regulatory frameworks on chemical security. This included identifying gaps and potential means to address them, and discussing approaches to developing appropriate chemical security measures. Participants completed specific training modules, shared information on their national legal frameworks on chemical security, and attended an interactive online session.
6. Forty-nine participants from Angola, Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Africa, the Sudan, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, and Zimbabwe attended the event. Representatives from the International Council of Chemical Associations, the International Chemical Trade Association, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) were also present to share their expertise and discuss key issues and various initiatives aimed at enhancing national legal frameworks on chemical security.

General Training Course on the Convention for the Personnel of National Authorities and Relevant Stakeholders, online, 19 – 22 April 2021

7. A general training course on the Convention for the personnel of National Authorities and relevant stakeholders was conducted online from 19 to 22 April 2021. The course provided an opportunity for participants to increase their knowledge of the Convention, including in regard to the preparation of annual submissions concerning national implementing legislation, national protective programmes, the annual submission of Article VI declarations, and receiving and coordinating inspections. Participants also gained a better understanding of the significance of enhanced partnership and concrete engagement between the National Authority and relevant national stakeholders.
8. Sixty-seven participants from 41 States Parties took part in the training course.

ASSISTANCE AND PROTECTION – ARTICLE X

Meeting of Assistance and Protection Partner Training Centres in GRULAC, online, 19 and 20 January 2021

9. The Secretariat organised a meeting to inform partner training centres in the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC) about the planned assistance and protection programme for 2021 and to maintain its engagement with regional partners. The discussion focused on online capacity-building activities in conjunction with national training centres in light of the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions, on potential in-person assistance and protection courses for the GRULAC region in 2021, as well as on improving regional cooperation, including a discussion on how State Parties in possession of more advanced technology could further support capacity development in the region as a whole.
10. Twenty-four participants took part in the meeting, representing national partner centres and National Authorities of the following nine GRULAC Member States: Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, and Peru.

Basic Course on Emergency Management Tools Against Chemical Warfare Agents and Toxic Industrial Chemicals for First Responders of GRULAC States Parties, online, 1 – 5 February 2021

11. The Secretariat designed and conducted, with the technical support of international instructors from Spain and Peru, a training course to improve knowledge of hazardous substances, including hazard identification, protective distance plotting, and containment using the Wireless Information System for Emergency Responders (WISER) and the Emergency Response Guidebook (ERG). During this one-week course for the GRULAC region, first responders were introduced to the Convention, and in particular Article X thereof, chemical agents, and other necessary technical information that can be used to benefit from these important chemical emergency management tools.
12. The course was attended by 46 representatives from the following 15 States Parties: Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay.

Introductory Course on the OPCW and its Mission and Response to Chemical Incidents, for Students of the Master CBRNe Programme at the University of Rome – Tor Vergata, online, 1 – 5 February 2021

13. The Secretariat conducted an introductory online course from 1 to 5 February 2021 on the OPCW and its mission and response to chemical incidents for students of the Master CBRNe (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and explosives) Programme at the University of Rome – Tor Vergata. The programme focused on educating students about the specific functions of the OPCW and the processes carried out by the Secretariat in the execution of its mandate under the Convention.

Meeting of the Editorial Panel for the Second OPCW “Practical Guide for Medical Management of Chemical Warfare Casualties”, online, 16 and 17 February 2021

14. The first meeting of the editorial panel for the second volume of the OPCW “Practical Guide for Medical Management of Chemical Warfare Casualties” was held on 16 and 17 February 2021. In developing the second volume of the Guide, the Secretariat will focus on medical treatment of long-term health effects of exposure to chemical warfare agents, in line with the decision of the Conference of the States Parties at its Sixteenth Session on “The Establishment of the International Support Network for Victims of Chemical Weapons and the Establishment of a Voluntary Trust Fund for This Purpose” (C-16/DEC.13, dated 2 December 2011). The medical guidebook would be made available for practitioners and medical professionals worldwide on the Supporting Victims webpage of the OPCW website.
15. During the two-day meeting, nine leading experts from around the world finalised the outline of the book, discussed the key contents, and divided responsibility for the initial drafting of the various chapters to be completed before the next meeting, planned for the summer of 2021.

Basic Course on Detection, Identification and Sampling of Chemical Warfare Agents and Toxics Industrial Chemicals for First Responders of GRULAC States Parties, online, 1 – 5 March 2021

16. The Secretariat, in partnership with the Colombian National Police, National Directorate of Colombian Firefighters, and the Engineering School of the Uruguayan Army, conducted a training course aimed at providing first responders from the GRULAC region with core theoretical knowledge of detection, identification, and sampling in highly contaminated environments. The training programme focused on Article X, chemical agents, personal protection, detection and identification techniques, as well as sampling techniques and procedures.
17. The course was attended by 38 representatives from the following 12 States Parties: Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Peru, and Uruguay.

Basic Training Course on the Wireless Information System for Emergency Responders and the Use of the Emergency Response Guidebook for First Responders in States Parties of the Southern African Development Community, online, 2 and 3 March 2021

18. The Secretariat, in partnership with the Population Protection Institute of the Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic, conducted an online training course for first responders from States Parties in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) aimed at providing a wide range of information on hazardous substances, including hazard identification, protective distance plotting, and containment using WISER and the ERG. The course also aimed at facilitating the exchange of information regarding the implementation of Article X and fostering regional networking.
19. The training was attended by 24 professionals from nine States Parties in the SADC region: Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, South Africa, the United Republic of Tanzania, and Zimbabwe. An observer from Nigeria also attended.

International Training Course on Reconnaissance and Sampling Operations in a Highly Contaminated Environment, online, 15 – 19 March 2021

20. An online training course on reconnaissance and sampling operations in a highly contaminated environment, organised in partnership with the Defence Science and Technology Organization of Pakistan, gathered a record number of participants from all regional groups to disseminate fundamental knowledge regarding detection, identification, and sampling in highly contaminated environments. The training programme focused on Article X, chemical agents, personal protection, detection and identification techniques, as well as sampling techniques and procedures.
21. The course was attended by 184 representatives from the following 41 States Parties: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cuba, Ecuador, Georgia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Italy, Kenya, Lesotho, Malaysia, Mauritania, Mongolia, Morocco, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, the Philippines, Portugal, Romania, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, Tajikistan, Togo, Ukraine, the United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam, and Zimbabwe. Approximately 70% of the participants were taking part in an OPCW training programme for the first time.

Basic Course on Emergency Management Tools against Chemical Warfare Agents and Toxic Industrials Chemicals for First Responders of GRULAC States Parties, online, 12 – 16 April 2021

22. Responding to a high level of demand and interest following the first such course, the Secretariat conducted the second iteration of a basic course on emergency management tools (WISER and ERG) against chemical warfare agents and toxic industrials chemicals for first responders from GRULAC States Parties. During the course, the participants were introduced to concepts about the Convention, Article X, chemical agents, and other necessary technical knowledge for using chemical emergency management tools.
23. A further 45 first responders (from Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Peru) were provided with basic knowledge of chemical emergency management through WISER and ERG.

Basic Training Course on the Wireless Information System for Emergency Responders and the use of the Emergency Response Guidebook for First Responders in States Parties of the Economic Community of West African States, online, 28-29 April 2021

24. The Secretariat, in partnership with the Population Protection Institute of the Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic, conducted a training for first responders aimed at providing a wide range of information on hazardous substances, including hazard identification, protective distance plotting, and containment using WISER and the ERG. The course also aimed at facilitating the exchange of information regarding the implementation of Article X and fostering regional networking.
25. The course was attended by 18 professionals from seven OPCW Member States of the Economic Community of West African States: Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal, and Togo.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION – ARTICLE XI

Chemical Safety and Security Management Programme for Asian States Parties, online, 23 February 2021

26. The Secretariat organised an online training programme on chemical safety and security management for Asian States Parties on 23 February 2021. The workshop was organised in collaboration with the National Committee for the Prohibition of Weapons of Qatar. The programme focused on chemical security management in chemical plants and mechanisms to prevent diversion of schedule chemicals for malicious use.
27. Expert trainers from the OPCW, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, INTERPOL, and the International Labour Organization led participants through interactive learning sessions, and responded to participants' questions about applying the training to their own national contexts. The workshop was attended by 88 representatives from the following 15 States Parties: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Pakistan, the Philippines, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Viet Nam, Germany (observer), and Spain (observer).

Chemical Security Vulnerability Assessment and Audit for South-Eastern European States Parties, online, 26 February 2021

28. The Secretariat held an online chemical security vulnerability assessment and audit for stakeholders in South-Eastern Europe, in collaboration with the RACVIAC – Centre for Security Cooperation in Croatia.
29. The Programme focused on chemical plant security elements and management strategies, chemical supply chain vulnerability assessments, and process safety management and audits for chemical plants. The workshop was attended by 28 participants from the following nine States Parties: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey, Germany (observer), and Italy (observer).

Proficiency Tests Training Course within the “Project on Assessing and Enhancing Capacity of Analytical Laboratories from African and GRULAC Member States”, online, 11 – 25 March 2021 (GRULAC Member States) and 15 – 19 March 2021 (African Member States)

30. The Secretariat organised online training courses on OPCW proficiency tests within the framework of the “Project on Assessing and Enhancing Capacity of Analytical Laboratories from African and GRULAC Member States”, which is funded through a voluntary contribution from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The training courses focused on the in-depth strategies and procedures required to pass the Official OPCW Proficiency Tests, which is the primary requirement for laboratories to obtain and maintain OPCW designated status. The trainings combined theory and exercises and covered elements related to participation in the tests, such as sample treatment, analytical techniques, microsynthesis, test criteria, and reporting.
31. The course for GRULAC Member States was organised from 11 to 25 March 2021 and accommodated 12 participants from Brazil and Chile.
32. The course for African Member States was organised from 15 to 19 March 2021 and accommodated 17 participants from Kenya and Nigeria.

Forum on the Peaceful Uses of Chemistry: New Norms for OPCW Capacity-Building Programmes after the COVID-19 Pandemic, online, 1 April 2021

33. The Secretariat organised an online “Forum on the Peaceful Uses of Chemistry: New Norms for OPCW Capacity-Building Programmes after the COVID-19 Pandemic” for African States Parties on 1 April 2021. The forum aimed at creating a platform for States Parties to share lessons learned and best practices related to capacity building, particularly in the area of chemical safety and security management, and to identify ways forward and potential areas for international cooperation.
34. The forum was attended by 37 participants from the following 13 States Parties: Algeria, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, the Niger, Nigeria, Uganda, Sierra Leone, the Sudan, and Germany. Representatives from the University of Wuppertal of Germany shared their expertise during the forum.

Closing Workshop for the 2020–2021 phase of the “Project on Assessing and Enhancing Capacity of Analytical Laboratories from African and GRULAC Member States”, online, 8 April 2021

35. The Secretariat organised an online closing workshop for the 2020–2021 phase of the “Project on Assessing and Enhancing Capacity of Analytical Laboratories from African and GRULAC Member States” on 8 April 2021. The workshop summarised the progress achieved in the project, funded through a voluntary contribution from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and brought project participants together to discuss the way forward in the third phase of the project, covering the period 2021–2022.
36. The workshop was attended by 27 participants from Brazil, Chile, Finland, Germany, Kenya, Nigeria, Spain, and the United Kingdom.

Equipment Exchange and Research Project Support Programme

37. Under the Equipment Exchange Programme, the Secretariat facilitated a donation of a gas chromatograph-mass spectrometer between a laboratory in Germany and the National Authority of the Sudan. The equipment was delivered to the Sudan on 24 April 2021. One sponsorship for an institute in Argentina was initiated under the Programme for Support of Research Projects.