

**NOTE BY THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT****UPDATE ON EVENTS ORGANISED BY THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT
IN THE AREA OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE
MAY – AUGUST 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 May to 31 August 2021.
2. Owing to the ongoing restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, capacity-building activities continued to be organised in an online format during this reporting period. From January to the end of August 2021, a total of 47 such events were held, benefitting some 2,200 participants from all regions. While the Secretariat constantly strives to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of online courses, it continues to closely monitor the evolving situation, with a view to resuming in-person activities as soon as conditions will permit.

IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT – ARTICLE VII**Training Course for Representatives of Customs Training Institutions, online,
25 – 27 May 2021**

3. The Secretariat, in cooperation with the World Customs Organization, held an online training course from 25 to 27 May on the enforcement of the Convention’s scheduled chemicals transfer regime. The intensive course aimed to equip frontline customs officers with the skills and knowledge required to effectively monitor the cross-border movement of toxic chemicals, while also underscoring the role of the Convention in supporting global, regional, and national security. The course was completed by 61 participants from the following 40 Member States representing all regional groups: Algeria, the Bahamas, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Cuba, Cyprus, France, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Italy, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, South Africa, Spain, the State of Palestine, the Sudan, Suriname, Turkey, Uganda, and Zambia.



Twentieth Regional Meeting of National Authorities of States Parties in Eastern Europe, online, 2 and 3 June 2021

4. The Twentieth Regional Meeting of National Authorities of States Parties in Eastern Europe was held online on 2 and 3 June. The meeting provided national delegates with an opportunity to meet to discuss issues, challenges, and priorities relating to Convention implementation. National Authorities also exchanged views on chemical safety and security management, including on the role of women in the field, and were briefed on the use of electronic declarations tools and the status of the new OPCW Centre for Chemistry and Technology (ChemTech Centre). The meeting was attended by 26 representatives from the following 20 Member States: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Poland, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Ukraine.

Twenty-Second Regional Meeting of National Authorities of States Parties in Latin America and the Caribbean, online, 8 – 10 June 2021

5. The Twenty-Second Regional Meeting of National Authorities of States Parties in Latin America and the Caribbean was held online from 8 to 10 June. During the meeting, representatives shared experiences and discussed common challenges in implementing the Convention at the national level and identified strategies to strengthen regional coordination. The meeting also provided representatives with an opportunity to engage with the Secretariat on issues relating to education and outreach, technical assistance, and capacity-building opportunities, and on the use of electronic declaration tools. The meeting was attended by 53 representatives from the following 22 Member States: Argentina, the Bahamas, Barbados, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

Nineteenth Regional Meeting of National Authorities of States Parties in Africa, online, 15 – 17 June 2021

6. The Nineteenth Regional Meeting of National Authorities of States Parties in Africa was held online from 15 to 17 June. The meeting focused on strengthening national implementation of the Convention through the adoption of national implementing legislation, compliance with the Convention's verification obligations, and means to expand regional education and outreach activities in relation to the Convention. National Authority representatives shared experiences on the development and adoption of national implementing legislation and exchanged views on strengthening National Authorities' capacity for effectively liaising with the OPCW. Forty-two representatives from the following 21 Member States attended the meeting: Algeria, Angola, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, Seychelles, South Africa, the Sudan, Togo, Tunisia, and Zimbabwe.

Nineteenth Regional Meeting of National Authorities of States Parties in Asia, online, 22 – 24 June 2021

7. The Nineteenth Regional Meeting of National Authorities of States Parties in Asia was held online from 22 to 24 June. During the meeting, National Authorities provided updates, discussed challenges, and shared lessons learned on issues concerning national implementation of the Convention. Representatives also engaged with the Secretariat on a range of issues relating to strengthening national capacities under Articles VI, VII, X, and XI of the Convention, and were briefed on the Secretariat's technical assistance and capacity-building agenda, the status of the OPCW's ChemTech Centre, and progress related to the International Cooperation and Assistance Division's gender mainstreaming efforts. Fifty representatives from the following 26 Member States attended the meeting: Afghanistan, Australia,¹ Bahrain, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Japan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan, the Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, the State of Palestine, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates, and Viet Nam.

ASSISTANCE AND PROTECTION – ARTICLE X

Basic Course on Chemical Decontamination Procedures for First Responders from States Parties in Latin America and the Caribbean, online, 10 – 14 May

8. A second online basic course on chemical warfare agent and toxic industrial chemical decontamination procedures for first responders from the Group of Latin America and Caribbean States (GRULAC) was delivered from 10 to 14 May, with the technical assistance of the Special Risks Brigade of the Argentine Federal Police. Participants learned how to develop and implement decontamination procedures and techniques following chemical incidents. First responders discussed their experiences with chemical decontamination and were provided with an overview of the Convention, focusing on assistance and protection against chemical weapons under Article X.
9. The course was attended by 83 military and civilian professionals from a range of response systems, including civil defence, fire departments, police, as well as chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) defence military units. They represented 13 Member States: Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay.

Defence Operations and Assistance and Protection against Chemical Threats for First Responders from the Latin America and Caribbean States Parties, online, 17 – 19 May

10. An online workshop on defence operations and assistance and protection against chemical threats for first responders from GRULAC States Parties was conducted by the Secretariat from 17 to 19 May, in cooperation with the National Authority of Ecuador. Participants learned about the threats by non-State actors regarding the use of chemical agents as well as operational and organisational measures to counter such threats. Experts from Ecuador's civil and military institutions presented relevant national response systems.

¹ While Australia is not a member of the Asian Regional Group, it often participates in regional meetings of National Authorities of States Parties in Asia.

11. The workshop was attended by 154 military and civilian professionals from a range of response systems, including civil defence, fire departments, police, and CBRN defence military units. Participants represented 12 Member States from the GRULAC region: Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Grenada, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, and Uruguay. Observers from Spain also attended the workshop.

Online Basic Training Course on the Wireless Information System for Emergency Responders and Use of the Emergency Response Guidebook for First Responders in Eastern European States Parties, online, 18 and 19 May

12. The Secretariat held, in partnership with the Population Protection Institute of the Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic, an online course on the use of key chemical incident management tools—the Wireless Information System for Emergency Responders (WISER) and the Emergency Response Guidebook (ERG)—for first responders from States Parties of the Eastern European Group on 18 and 19 May.
13. The course was attended by 27 professionals from the following 11 States Parties: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, the Russian Federation, and Ukraine.

Special Workshop on Article X Assistance and Cooperation for States Parties in South-Eastern Europe, online, 19 May

14. The Secretariat, in partnership with the Regional Arms Control Verification and Implementation Assistance Centre (RACVIAC) – Centre for Security Cooperation, based in Croatia, conducted a special online workshop on Article X assistance and cooperation for States Parties in South-Eastern Europe on 19 May.
15. OPCW experts and staff from the RACVIAC – Centre for Security Cooperation facilitated a discussion among 10 representatives from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Romania, and North Macedonia on current needs of States Parties in South-Eastern Europe. These discussions were a first step in developing a subregional cooperation and assistance plan, with a view to enhancing preparedness and response capabilities against chemical attacks and incidents involving toxic industrial chemicals.

Modular Online Training Programme for Russian-speaking First Responders “Protection Against Chemical Weapons and Toxic Industrial Chemicals”, online, 25 – 27 May

16. The Secretariat, with support from the International Rescuers Training Centre based in Belarus, conducted a new modular online training programme for Russian-speaking first responders entitled “Protection Against Chemical Weapons and Toxic Industrial Chemicals”, from 25 to 27 May. The first specialised training module focused on the use of personal protection equipment and the skills needed for chemical emergency response. Participants learned about the most suitable personal protective equipment for given scenarios and acquired skills to determine the necessary level of protection while responding to chemical emergencies.

17. The course was attended by 84 professionals from the following 11 OPCW Member States: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Cambodia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

Incident Response Operations and Sampling for States Parties belonging to the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, online, 25 – 27 May

18. The Secretariat, in partnership with the Population Protection Institute of the Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic, organised a virtual course on incident response operations and sampling from 25 to 27 May for States Parties that are part of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). Participants learned about the detection, identification, sampling, and decontamination techniques required for reconnaissance and sampling operations in contaminated environments. The course also covered safety measures and necessary procedures for managing the response to relevant incidents.
19. The course was attended by 29 experts from four OPCW States Parties from the IGAD region: Ethiopia, Kenya, the Sudan, and Uganda.

Presentation of the Online Self-Assessment Tool to States Parties in the Southern African Development Community, online, 1 June

20. The Secretariat presented a new Online Self-Assessment Tool (OSAT) to States Parties in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) on 1 June. The tool, designed with financial and technical support from the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, is an initiative aimed at assisting National Authorities (initially from the SADC subregion) in assessing risks posed by hazardous chemicals, auditing existing response capacities, and identifying necessary improvements, including those that may be supported through relevant activities of the Secretariat.
21. The meeting was attended by 21 representatives of the National Authorities, national institutions, and Permanent Representations of the following seven OCPW Member States: Botswana, Madagascar, Mozambique, South Africa, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

National Basic Assistance and Protection Course for First Responders online, 14 – 16 June

22. The Secretariat supported the National Authority of Bangladesh in conducting a national basic assistance and protection course for responders (BAPCoR-2) from 14 to 16 June.
23. Twenty-eight national experts discussed Article X, national obligations, and respective capacity-building activities offered by the Secretariat, including the joint assessment of national capabilities/capacities and relevant needs for strengthening these to address chemical threats.

Emergency Response Involving Chemical Warfare Agents and Toxic Industrial Chemicals for First Responders of States Parties in the GRULAC region, online, 21 – 25 June

24. The Secretariat delivered, with technical support from the Hazardous Materials Unit of the Costa Rica Fire Brigade, an online course on emergency response involving chemical warfare agents and toxic industrial chemicals, from 21 to 25 June, for first responders of States Parties in the GRULAC region. The training covered types and characteristics of chemical warfare agents and industrial chemicals, incident command, personal protection, sampling, detection and identification, and decontamination.
25. The course was attended by 77 participants with military and/or civilian response backgrounds from the following 11 Member States: Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

Decontamination of Chemical Warfare Agents and Toxic Industrial Chemicals for First Responders of African States Parties, online, 13 – 15 July

26. The Secretariat, jointly with the Special Risks Brigade of the Argentine Federal Police, conducted from 13 to 15 July a training on sampling and analysis in a highly contaminated environment, as part of the OPCW's Instructor Development and Exchange Programme. This was the first OPCW training on decontamination for States Parties in Africa. Participants enhanced their theoretical knowledge on developing and implementing decontamination procedures and techniques and on hospital preparedness for chemical incidents, including victim triage systems in the aftermath of incidents involving chemical warfare agents and toxic industrial chemicals.
27. The course was attended by 61 experts from the following 19 Member States: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Nigeria, the Sudan, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, and the United Republic of Tanzania.

Course on Conducting Sampling and Analysis in a Highly Contaminated Environment for African States Parties, online, 27 – 29 July

28. The Secretariat and the Algerian National Institute of Forensic Science and Criminology of the Gendarmerie Nationale held a course on sampling and analysis in a contaminated environment for African States Parties from 27 to 29 July. Participants learned about theoretical and practical aspects of the detection, identification, sampling, and decontamination techniques used during reconnaissance and sampling operations in highly contaminated environments. The course also covered necessary safety measures and procedures during emergencies and included a simulated intervention involving recognition and sampling with full personal protection equipment.
29. The course was attended by 47 experts from the following 17 African Member States: Algeria, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Seychelles, Togo, and Uganda.

Modular Training Programme for Russian-speaking First Responders “Protection Against Chemical Weapons and Toxic Industrial Chemicals”, online, 28 July – 2 August

30. The specialised training, under the new modular online training programme for Russian-speaking first responders entitled “Protection Against Chemical Weapons and Toxic Industrial Chemicals”, was conducted with the International Rescuers Training Centre of Belarus from 28 July to 2 August. Attendees enhanced their knowledge of chemical reconnaissance devices, detection and identification of unknown chemicals, and equipment used while responding to chemical accidents and incidents.
31. The training was attended by 56 professionals from the following eight Member States: Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, and Ukraine.

Basic Training Course on the Wireless Information System for Emergency Responders and use of the Emergency Response Guidebook for First Responders in French-speaking African States Parties, online, 18 – 20 August

32. The Secretariat, in partnership with the Population Protection Institute of the Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic, held an online course on the use of key chemical incident management tools—WISER and the ERG—for first responders from French-speaking African States Parties from 18 to 20 August.
33. The course was attended by 24 professionals from the following 13 African Member States: Benin, Burundi, Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Senegal, Seychelles, Togo, and Tunisia.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION – ARTICLE XI

Intersessional Online Training for the Associate Programme 2021, online, 19 May – 1 June

34. A series of training modules under the Associate Programme was launched online in response to restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The interactive programme provided 27 professionals from 18 Member States with enhanced knowledge of the Convention, practical advice about its implementation, and best practices in relation to the chemical industry. The online training will become a prerequisite for participation in future editions of the full-fledged Associate Programme.
35. The training was attended by 27 participants, including scientists, chemical engineers, and technology specialists, representing the following 18 Member States: Afghanistan, Bahrain, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chile, Colombia, Ethiopia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Nigeria, the Philippines, the State of Palestine, the Sudan, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, and Zimbabwe.

Workshop on General Aspects of Chemical Safety and Security in Laboratories, online, 8 – 10 June

36. The Secretariat organised an online workshop on general aspects of chemical safety and security in laboratories, from 8 to 10 June. The workshop focused on best practices and knowledge about hazardous chemicals and related risk assessments, personal protection equipment, emergency management, environmental impacts, and sustainability. Attendees participated in a table-top exercise using a scenario involving hazardous chemicals to test emergency response and risk assessment skills.
37. The course was attended by 45 participants representing governmental agencies, chemical industries, and academic, research, and policy-making institutions in the following 17 Member States: Colombia, Cuba, India, Iraq, Italy, Malawi, Malaysia, Mauritius, Oman, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey, and Uruguay.

Workshop on “Best Practices to Develop the Responsible Care® Programme for the Chemical Industry”, online, 14 – 18 June

38. The Secretariat held an online workshop on “Best Practices to Develop the Responsible Care® Programme for the Chemical Industry” from 14 to 18 June. The workshop provided an update on the Responsible Care® programme focusing on sustainability, safety, and security in chemical industries. The workshop referenced case studies of Responsible Care® implementation in various enterprises, and included practical exercises and interactive sessions covering the prevention of environmental pollution, as well as strategic planning and decision making for the adoption of Responsible Care®.
39. Twenty environmental health and safety managers, qualified technologists, and representatives of chemical industry associations and governmental organisations from the following seven Member States participated in the event: Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

Workshop on Developing Guidelines for Chemical Safety and Security for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises to Foster the Peaceful Uses of Chemistry 2021, online, 29 June

40. The Secretariat organised an online workshop on 29 June to launch chemical safety and security management guidelines for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The guidelines, developed by a panel of experts, constitute a reference guide for SMEs implementing chemical safety and security measures, without providing detailed technical information on chemical safety and security management.
41. The launch was attended by 120 participants from the following 39 Member States: Algeria, Argentina, Bangladesh, Belarus, Brazil, Cameroon, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Ethiopia, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mexico, Myanmar, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, the Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Spain, Togo, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, the United States of America, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), and Zambia. Representatives of the International Council of Chemical Associations, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and the United Nations Environment Programme also attended.

Symposium on Women in Chemistry, online, 1 July

42. The Secretariat organised online on 1 July the Fifth Symposium on Women in Chemistry, dedicated to promoting equal roles and opportunities for women in the peaceful applications of chemistry.
43. The event, financially supported by the European Union, brought together 172 scientists, diplomats, academics, and chemical industry representatives from the following 64 Member States: Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Azerbaijan, the Bahamas, Bangladesh, Belarus, Botswana, Brazil, Burundi, Cameroon, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Thailand, Togo, Turkey, Ukraine, the United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, and Zambia.

Advanced Course on Chemical Safety and Security Management for African Member States, online, 2 July

44. The Secretariat organised an online training course on chemical safety and security management for African Member States on 2 July 2021. The course focused on supply chain safety and security strategies to prevent the misuse of highly toxic chemicals and to minimise internal and external threats. Participants reviewed the resources, tools, and skills needed to effectively promote chemical safety and security standards. The workshop also included a table-top exercise based on a scenario of a chemical accident at a storage site.
45. The course was attended by 29 participants representing the chemical industry and industry associations, National Authorities, government departments, and academia in the following 12 African Member States: Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nigeria, Seychelles, the Sudan, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

Advanced Course on Chemical Safety and Security Management for GRULAC Member States, online, 16 July

46. The Secretariat organised an online training course on chemical safety and security management for GRULAC Member States on 16 July. The course focused on structuring a national action plan for chemical safety and security towards the prevention of chemical accidents and incidents and the misuse of highly toxic chemicals.
47. The course was attended by 25 participants representing the chemical industry and industry associations, National Authorities, government departments, and academia in the following nine Member States: the Bahamas, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uruguay.

Two Courses on the Enhancement of Laboratory Skills at the Finnish Institute for Verification of the Chemical Weapons Convention, online, Helsinki, Finland, 23 – 27 August

48. Two online training courses aimed at enhancing the laboratory skills of participants on chemical weapons-related liquid chromatography and mass spectrometry (LCMS) and laboratory quality management (LQM), respectively, were held in parallel by the Finnish Institute for Verification of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Four analytical chemists from Iraq, Kenya, Malaysia, and Namibia attended the LCMS course, while five analytical chemists from Cameroon, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Tajikistan attended the LQM course.

Conference Support Programme

49. Two events to promote the peaceful use of chemistry were supported under the Conference Support Programme. One event (held in a hybrid format) was organised by the University of Venice (Italy), and 64 participants were sponsored to attend. The other event (held online) was organised by the University of Mauritius, and 100 participants were sponsored.

Fellowship Programme

50. A three-month fellowship for a Jordanian national hosted in an institution in France commenced on 25 June.

Programme for the Support of Research Projects

51. Two research projects undertaken by Malaysian researchers began during the reporting period, bringing the total number of ongoing research projects directly funded by the OPCW to 23.

THE OPCW AFRICA PROGRAMME

Third Meeting of the Steering Committee of the OPCW Africa Programme, online, 25 June

52. The third meeting of the Steering Committee of the OPCW Africa Programme, chaired by H.E. Ambassador Lawrence Lenayapa, the Permanent Representative of Kenya to the OPCW, reviewed the progress achieved in the implementation of the Africa Programme since its second meeting on 16 November 2020. The meeting was attended by over 60 participants representing Steering Committee members and observers, as well as Secretariat staff led by the Director-General.
53. The Secretariat delivered a detailed briefing on the developments in the framework of the Africa Programme during the reporting period. The Committee took note of the progress achieved in Programme implementation despite the continuing constraints imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Committee expressed its high appreciation of Programme accomplishments and commended the Secretariat, as well as the Programme partners and donors, for their valuable contributions.