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NOTE BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL**THE PROGRAMME TO STRENGTHEN COOPERATION WITH AFRICA
ON THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION****INTRODUCTION**

1. The Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa on the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter “the Africa Programme”) was instituted by the Director-General in 2007 (EC-50/DG.17, dated 26 September 2007) to give strategic direction to the engagement of the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter “the Secretariat”) with African States Parties as regards implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter “the Convention”).
2. The Africa Programme was initially intended to last three years, from 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2010. Since then, the Programme has been extended four times, each for a three-year period: from 2011 to 2013 (EC-64/DG.5, dated 6 April 2011), from 2014 to 2016 (EC-75/DG.5, dated 17 February 2014), from 2017 to 2019 (EC-84/DG.18, dated 17 February 2017), and from 2020 to 2022 (EC-93/DG.9, dated 18 February 2020).
3. Since the establishment of the Africa Programme, the Director-General has regularly apprised the Conference of the States Parties (hereinafter “the Conference”) at all of its annual sessions of the progress of Programme implementation and of the results achieved.
4. This Note reports on the progress achieved in the implementation of the Africa Programme in 2021, which represents the second year of the fifth phase of the Programme, and provides an overview of the key developments, activities, and results achieved within its framework.
5. As the cut-off date of this document is 31 August 2021, the document provides factual information regarding the key developments registered in the Programme in 2021 up until that date. It also reflects planned activities for the remainder of the year. Annex 1 of the Note provides an overview of all activities conducted in and planned for the remainder of 2021 under the Programme.



6. In accordance with established practice, the factual reporting on the planned activities for the period from 1 September to 31 December 2021 will be provided as an annex to the next Note by the Director-General on the Africa Programme, due to be submitted to the Conference at its Twenty-Seventh Session in 2022. Similarly, Annex 2 of the present Note factually reports on key activities organised under the Programme in the period from 1 September to 31 December 2020.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AFRICA PROGRAMME IN 2021

7. The implementation of the Africa Programme continued to progress apace in 2021, in accordance with the planning of its fifth phase. Throughout the year, the Secretariat has significantly intensified the delivery of its targeted activities and has been addressing the eight objectives of the fifth phase concurrently.
8. In terms of capacity building and provision of technical assistance, which constitute the backbone of the Programme, a total of 52 relevant activities addressing all eight objectives of the fifth phase have been scheduled for delivery by the Secretariat in 2021, including 29 activities specifically for the Africa region.
9. The comprehensive list of activities, attached as Annex 1, includes targeted training courses, workshops, forums, exercises, technical consultations, and coaching sessions.
10. Areas of these activities range from improving the national implementation of the Convention to enhancing the effectiveness of National Authorities, improving control over cross-border transfers of scheduled chemicals, developing assistance and protection capabilities against chemical incidents and attacks, providing education on chemical safety and security management, and upgrading laboratory competencies across the continent.
11. As at the cut-off date of this Note, 34 of the 52 aforementioned training activities had already been delivered, including 21 activities organised specifically for the Africa region. These 34 activities accommodated some 550 African participants from 33 African Member States, which already exceeds the average number of African participants under the Programme per year (around 400 participants).
12. Due to the continued restrictions imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, the Secretariat has continued to use online modalities for the conduct of capacity-building activities for a large portion of the year, while paying due regard to the Organisation's information security and confidentiality requirements.
13. In addition to live sessions with participants, the Secretariat has been using diverse online learning tools for the delivery of training courses. These tools include self-paced e-learning modules, recorded presentations, scenario-based exercises, and quizzes.
14. In parallel, the Secretariat has continued to closely monitor the COVID-19 pandemic situation and has been maintaining its readiness to resume in-person training activities as soon as conditions allow. A fellowship at the Spiez Laboratory, Switzerland, from 30 August to 26 November 2021, benefiting a chemist from Zimbabwe and sponsored by the OPCW, constitutes the first activity taking place in person under the Africa Programme since the beginning of the pandemic. Other activities are tentatively scheduled to take place in person in the remainder of 2021, should the public health situation permit.

15. The Secretariat plans to leverage online learning, as appropriate, to supplement, complement, and thus further enhance future in-person capacity-building activities.
16. In addition to capacity-building and technical assistance activities, the Secretariat has also provided sponsorship in 2021 to five fellowships and four research projects for African scientists. Eight additional African research projects have been co-funded with the International Foundation for Science (IFS). A further five sponsored fellowships are to take place either in the fourth quarter of 2021 or in 2022. The Secretariat also provided sponsorship, under the Conference Support Programme, to two international scientific events held in Italy and Mauritius, which accommodated, inter alia, 137 scientists from Africa.
17. Further, under the Equipment Exchange Programme, in April 2021 the Secretariat completed the transfer of laboratory equipment donated by Germany to the United Republic of Tanzania.
18. More details regarding the aforementioned activities are reflected in Annex 1.

Programme funding

19. The Africa Programme continues to be funded essentially through the OPCW regular budget. The analysis of the funding history over the period from 2014 to 2019 shows that 83% of the Programme costs have been covered from the OPCW regular budget.
20. To further expand the Programme's depth, reach, and impact, the Secretariat has also been seeking additional resources through voluntary contributions. In 2021, as at the cut-off date of this document, activities under the Africa Programme have been receiving in-kind and financial support from the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and the European Union. In-kind support has also been provided by African Member States co-organising activities under the Programme. More details on the voluntary contributions received under the Programme in 2021 are included in Annex 1.

Special projects for extra-budgetary funding

21. As part of its efforts aimed at expanding the Programme impact and channelling additional resources for it, in 2020 the Secretariat developed a series of eight special projects for extra-budgetary funding for the benefit of the Africa region.
22. The special projects address the three overarching areas of need identified for the fifth phase, namely, chemical safety and security, laboratory development, and national implementation of the Convention. The total estimated budget of the eight proposed projects to address the areas of need amounts to EUR 1.2 million. An overview of these projects is provided in the table below.

TABLE: SPECIAL PROJECTS FOR EXTRA-BUDGETARY FUNDING

Project	Total Estimated Budget (EUR)
CHEMEX Africa: building chemical incident response capacity under the OPCW Africa Programme	405,900
Regional conference on enforcing effective customs control over the trade in toxic chemicals in Africa	165,000
Specialised analytical chemistry course for laboratories supporting customs services in Africa	81,400
Peer-to-peer training for African customs training institutions	216,700
Specialised course on equipment maintenance and troubleshooting for laboratories in African States Parties	66,700
Influential visitors programme for the Pan-African Parliament	71,500
Legal workshop for African parliamentary institutions	41,800
Enhancing south-south cooperation through the Mentorship/Partnership Programme	154,000
Total	1,203,000

23. The projects were announced to all States Parties in a video presentation on 1 July 2020, and the detailed project proposals were made available on the OPCW extranet (<http://data.opcw.org/external/homepage.nsf>) under Informal Papers/2020/Technical Secretariat/OPCW Programme for Africa.
24. In November 2020, the United States of America provided a voluntary contribution fully covering the estimated funds required for Project 3, the specialised analytical chemistry course for laboratories supporting customs services in Africa.
25. In 2021, the Secretariat has continued its efforts aimed at identifying funding sources for the remaining special projects. Resources from the OPCW special fund for capacity building for laboratories have been assigned to Project 5, the specialised course on equipment maintenance and troubleshooting for laboratories in African States Parties. As at the date of the drafting of this report, a procurement process was under way to identify suitable laboratories for the co-organisation and hosting of the specialised laboratory courses under Projects 3 and 5 on a face-to-face basis.
26. Furthermore, in April 2021, the Secretariat submitted project proposals 1 and 4, respectively CHEMEX and the peer-to-peer training for African customs training institutions, for the consideration of the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction (hereinafter “the Global Partnership”).

27. Following the presentation of the two above-mentioned projects, among others, to the Global Partnership, during meetings held in April and June 2021, the Government of Canada indicated in July 2021 that it intends to provide funding for the two projects. As at the date of the drafting of this report, discussions were under way between the Secretariat and Canada regarding the contribution details and modalities.
28. As at the cut-off date of this Note, the extra-budgetary funding already received or envisaged for four proposed special projects represented 64% of the total amount required for all proposed special projects. The Secretariat continues its resource mobilisation efforts for the remaining special projects.

Africa Programme Steering Committee

29. In 2021, the Africa Programme Steering Committee continued to provide support, advice, and guidance to the Secretariat for the implementation of the Programme.
30. In accordance with the concept and planning of the fifth phase, the Committee, which meets twice a year, is composed of 10 African States Parties nominated by the African Group of States Parties on annual rotational basis.
31. The nominated Committee members for 2021 are: Algeria, Angola, Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, and the Sudan. Kenya has assumed the Committee chairpersonship for 2021.
32. The Czech Republic, France, Germany, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and the European Union are observers in the Committee, as they contribute financially to the Programme.
33. The Committee held its third meeting successfully online on 25 June 2021, with the participation of over 60 participants representing Committee members and observers, as well as the Secretariat.
34. Chaired by H.E. Ambassador Lawrence Lenayapa, Permanent Representative of Kenya to the OPCW and Chairperson of the Committee, the meeting consisted of a review of the progress achieved in the implementation of the Africa Programme since the second meeting of the Committee, held on 16 November 2020. A detailed briefing on the developments registered in the framework of the Programme during the reporting period was delivered by the Secretariat. The Committee took note with great appreciation of the progress achieved in the Programme implementation despite the constraints imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic and commended the Secretariat, as well as the Programme partners and donors, for their valuable contributions.
35. The fourth meeting of the Committee is scheduled to take place on 15 November 2021.

PARTNERSHIPS AND COOPERATION, STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT, AND PROGRAMME VISIBILITY

36. Strong partnerships, stakeholder engagement, and Programme visibility were identified as key enablers of the success of the Africa Programme. Consequently, the concept and plan of the fifth phase indicated, under objective 8, additional efforts to be made in this regard in comparison with the four previous generations of the Programme.

Partnership and cooperation

37. In 2021, the Secretariat has continued to engage actively with a variety of relevant Programme partners and stakeholders to enhance synergies, deliver on planned projects and activities, and explore new and effective partnerships. As highlighted in Annex 1 of this Note, the current list of partners features national, regional, and global organisations that are relevant to the Programme implementation and development, including the World Customs Organization (WCO), the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), African Regional Economic Communities, government agencies, academia, laboratories, research institutions, and chemical industries and associations.
38. In terms of collaboration with the African Union, the Secretariat convened a productive online meeting with the African Union's Political Affairs, Peace and Security Commission (AU-PAPS) on 18 December 2020. During the meeting, the Secretariat briefed the Commission in detail on the implementation of the Convention in Africa and the Africa Programme, and submitted a clear action plan aimed at revitalising the bilateral cooperation between the two organisations.
39. Based on the memorandum of understanding signed by the two organisations in 2006, the action plan includes targeted areas of cooperation and proposes specific actions, together with timelines for their implementation. It consists in total of 12 proposed actions in the areas of collaboration and conduct of joint activities, conduct of regular consultations, and the exchange of visits at the senior level, COVID-19 situation permitting, in addition to organisational arrangements such as the designation of focal points and holding of periodic coordination meetings.
40. The AU-PAPS warmly welcomed the OPCW initiative and contacts have since been maintained throughout 2021 to reactivate the bilateral cooperation along the lines of the proposed action plan.
41. In addition, a knowledge-sharing meeting on the Africa Programme was held on 13 April 2021 with the Implementation Support Unit of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC-ISU) and UNODA, at their request, in the framework of the potential development and coordination, by the BWC-ISU, of a "signature initiative" on biosecurity in Africa.

Ensuring continuous engagement of Programme beneficiaries

42. As outlined in the Note pertaining to the planning of the fifth phase of the Africa Programme (EC-93/DG.9), the Secretariat reviewed the Programme impact assessment approach and, as a result, a more structured framework has been developed and rolled out. The framework is based on a system of mandatory post-participation action plans to be implemented by the African participants in the various capacity-building activities under the Programme. These action plans contribute to ensuring the continuous engagement of the African participants, and hence facilitate the best possible impact of the Programme.
43. In 2021, the Secretariat has continued to engage, based on post-participation plans, the alumni of capacity-building activities organised under the Programme. Copies of these plans were also addressed to the respective National Authorities and Permanent Representations of the alumni for their records and continued coordination and follow-up.

Programme visibility

The OPCW Africa Network

44. Successfully established in the fifth phase of the Programme using a Facebook group page, the OPCW Africa Network has continued to be regularly maintained and developed in 2021. Outreach efforts on the part of the Secretariat have continued to attract relevant stakeholders among African chemistry professionals and other Africa Programme stakeholders within the region's governments, industries, academia, laboratories, research institutions, and so on. As at the cut-off date of this document, the network counted over 850 active members.
45. The network is well regarded and is being effectively used as a platform for expertise and information sharing, in particular on chemistry-related developments, OPCW capacity-building events, sponsorships, and employment opportunities.

The OPCW Africa Bulletin

46. The OPCW Africa Bulletin constitutes another tool employed by the Secretariat since the launch of the fifth phase of the Programme to improve the visibility and the continued engagement of partners and beneficiaries alike.
47. The first edition of the Bulletin was published in November 2020 and was very well received by Programme stakeholders. The issuance of the second edition of the Bulletin is scheduled for November 2021.

CONCLUSION

48. In 2021, the implementation of the OPCW Africa Programme has continued to progress apace, in accordance with the objectives and planning of its fifth phase.
49. Despite the restrictions imposed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Secretariat has continued to deliver targeted capacity building and technical support to African Member States. A total of 52 capacity-building and technical assistance activities are scheduled to benefit African participants in 2021, including 29 events organised specifically for the Africa region.
50. Building on the experience gained and lessons learned, the Secretariat has been delivering continuously improved training courses in 2021, mainly in an online format, while paying due regard to the Organisation's information security and confidentiality requirements.
51. In addition, as part of its continued efforts aimed at promoting peaceful applications of chemistry in Africa, in 2021 the Secretariat has continued to provide financial support to relevant scientific conferences, fellowships, and research projects and has facilitated a transfer of laboratory equipment for the benefit of the Africa region.
52. In 2021, the Secretariat has continued to develop and consolidate relevant collaboration and partnership ties with a wide array of international, regional, and national organisations to ensure relevant synergies and effective Programme implementation. It has also continued to engage Programme beneficiaries, with a view to facilitating the best possible impact of the activities conducted under the Programme.

53. Moreover, the Secretariat has continued to advance work on various strategic Programme-related initiatives, such as the resource mobilisation for the special projects for extra-budgetary funding, the OPCW Africa Network, and the OPCW Africa Bulletin.
54. The role played by National Authorities in terms of follow-up by the alumni of OPCW capacity-building events from their respective Member States and the coordination of their post-training activities is essential for further capitalisation on the results of the Programme.

Annexes (English only):

- Annex 1: Overview of Key Activities Conducted in 2021 and Planned for the Remainder of 2021 in the Framework of the Fifth Phase of the OPCW Africa Programme (as at 31 August 2021)
- Annex 2: Overview of Key Activities Conducted in the Framework of the Fifth Phase of the OPCW Africa Programme from 1 September to 31 December 2020

Annex 1

OVERVIEW OF KEY ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED IN 2021 AND PLANNED FOR THE REMAINDER OF 2021 IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE FIFTH PHASE OF THE OPCW AFRICA PROGRAMME (AS AT 31 AUGUST 2021)

OBJECTIVE 1: ADVANCE NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION IN AFRICA & OBJECTIVE 2: ENHANCE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL AUTHORITIES

Individual technical consultations in areas of national implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, online, Q1 2021

1. During the first quarter of 2021, the Secretariat held a series of online technical consultations with Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, South Africa, and the Sudan, in the areas of national implementation of the Convention. These individual consultations facilitated the provision of relevant expertise and helped identify areas of national implementation for which participating Member States require specific assistance.

National legislative review forum for Mauritania, online, 23 February 2021

2. The forum allowed the review and provision of technical advice to Mauritania in relation to the legislative and regulatory frameworks the country had devised in implementation of the Convention. Participants completed a preparatory online training course prior to live sessions with the Secretariat.

Training course on fulfilling declarations and inspections obligations under Article VI of the Chemical Weapons Convention, online, 1 March – 15 April 2021

3. This course accommodated representatives of National Authorities and relevant stakeholders who are involved in preparing national declarations and in the inspection process, particularly from the chemical industry and trade associations. From Africa, experts from Nigeria and Zambia participated in the training.
4. The course strengthened the knowledge of the participants in terms of relevant provisions of the Convention, particularly those related to the adoption of implementing legislation and adherence to the declaration and verification regimes.
5. The training programme consisted of two live sessions, one focused on declaration exercises and another on mock-inspection exercises. Both live sessions were concluded with interactive Q&A sessions. Participants conducted self-paced learning of pre-recorded presentations throughout the rest of the programme.

General training course on the Chemical Weapons Convention for the personnel of National Authorities and relevant stakeholders, online, 19 – 22 April 2021

6. The course contributed to strengthening the capacities of participating Member States in implementing the Convention, and highlighted the crucial role of National Authorities in establishing strong national stakeholder networks to ensure the full implementation of the Convention.
7. The training involved a range of learning methods, including live interactive sessions, quizzes, practical exercises, and self-study. A case study on adopting implementing legislation on the Convention proved to be of particular interest and generated lively discussions among the participants.
8. Representatives from the following African Member States attended the course: Algeria, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Mozambique, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, the Sudan, and Togo.

Consultations with Togo on the status of its draft law implementing the Chemical Weapons Convention, online, 3 June 2021

9. During these consultations, Togolese delegates provided the Secretariat with updates on progress made since their participation in the OPCW Influential Visitors Programme in 2019 and discussed ongoing challenges in light of operational restrictions imposed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Secretariat continued to provide legal technical assistance to the National Authority's efforts to build momentum for the adoption of the draft legislation.

Nineteenth regional meeting of National Authorities from the Africa region, online, 15 – 17 June 2021

10. During this online meeting, representatives of National Authorities shared insights on effective implementation of the Convention at the national level, including appropriate verification activities and development of national legislation. They examined good practices and challenges encountered in their liaison role with the OPCW for the fulfilment of Member State obligations under the Convention. Participants also proposed fresh ideas to intensify Convention-related education and outreach activities in their nations.
11. The Secretariat briefed the participants about its new capacity-building initiatives designed to assist Member States in ensuring the full implementation of the Convention.
12. The meeting was attended by 42 representatives from the following 21 Member States: 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.

Third Meeting of the Steering Committee of the OPCW Africa Programme, online, 25 June 2021

13. Chaired by H.E. Ambassador Lawrence Lenayapa, Permanent Representative of Kenya to the OPCW and Chairperson of the Committee, the meeting reviewed the progress achieved in the implementation of the Africa Programme since its second meeting, held on 16 November 2020. In attendance were over 60 participants representing Committee members and observers, as well as the Secretariat.
14. A detailed briefing on the developments registered in the framework of the Africa Programme during the reporting period was delivered by the Secretariat. The Committee took note with high appreciation of the progress achieved in the Programme implementation despite the constraints imposed by the global COVID-19 pandemic and commended the Secretariat, as well as the Programme partners and donors, for their valuable contributions.

Assistance with the national implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention in Mozambique, online, 2 August 2021

15. As its request, the National Authority of Mozambique was provided with a copy of the OPCW's implementation kit on the Convention, which included a model text for drafting implementing legislation on the Convention. The Mozambique National Authority was also supplied with the text of the Convention in Portuguese, as well as the basic implementing law of Portugal on the Convention, in addition to other regulations the latter has adopted to implement the Convention.

Subregional training course on fulfilling declarations and inspections obligations under Article VI of the Chemical Weapons Convention for Arabic-speaking States Parties in the Middle East and North Africa, online, 13 – 30 September 2021

16. This course is primarily intended for representatives of National Authorities and relevant stakeholders, particularly in the chemical industry and trade associations, who are involved in compiling data and preparing national declarations and in the inspection process.
17. The training has two main objectives: to facilitate the submission by National Authorities of accurate and timely annual declarations required under Article VI of the Convention; and to provide practical guidance to States Parties on receiving and escorting OPCW inspections. The training course is also intended to raise general awareness among stakeholders on the requirements under Article VI of the Convention regarding national implementation.

Eighth annual meeting of representatives of the chemical industry and National Authorities of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, online, 12 and 13 October 2021

18. This meeting aims at providing a forum for National Authority representatives and States Parties' national chemical industry to discuss their respective roles in fulfilling Convention obligations. It enables National Authorities and the chemical industry to

enhance each other's understanding of the work they do in relation to the Convention, and how they can collaborate to achieve these goals. Funded by the State of Qatar, the meeting involves representatives from National Authorities and chemical industries from all regions, including Africa.

Fourth meeting of the Steering Committee of the OPCW Africa Programme, online, 15 November 2021

19. The meeting aims at reviewing the progress achieved in the implementation of the OPCW Africa Programme since the third meeting of the Committee, held on 25 June 2020, and to discuss any specific matters in this connection.

Briefing on the Chemical Weapons Convention for non-Hague based Permanent Representations to the OPCW, November 2021 (to be confirmed)

20. This event is designed to brief non-Hague based delegations, including those of African Member States, on the Convention, thereby enhancing their understanding and awareness regarding OPCW capacity-building activities and programmes.
21. As part of the event, an update is to be provided by the Secretariat on the implementation of the OPCW Africa Programme in 2021. The update will highlight opportunities provided to African States Parties in terms of capacity building and exchange of knowledge in the area of peaceful uses of chemistry.

Twenty-Third Annual Meeting of the National Authorities, online, 23 – 26 November 2021

22. The annual meeting contributes to the creation of global, regional, and subregional networks in support of the implementation of the Convention and provides opportunities to discuss and address specific issues and needs in respect of capacity-building support. Gathering National Authorities from all regions including Africa, the meeting also serves as an important forum for the Secretariat and the National Authorities to hold bilateral meetings.

Workshop on contributions and remaining challenges for cooperation between chemical industries and National Authorities, online, November 2021 (specific date to be determined)

23. The one-day workshop is scheduled to be held back-to-back with the Twenty-Third Annual Meeting of the National Authorities and will gather participants from all regions, including Africa.

Workshop on the role of implementing legislation in addressing threats arising from non-State actors, for French-speaking Member States in Central Africa, and potentially West and North Africa, Q4 2021 (to be confirmed)

24. Funded through a voluntary contribution from France, this three-day workshop is intended to support efforts aimed at enhancing the national implementation of the Convention.

25. Benefiting French-speaking Member States in Central Africa, and potentially West and North Africa also, this workshop will discuss how the Convention can contribute to addressing threats arising from non-State actors, the role of relevant national stakeholders in the implementation of national implementing legislation, the various modalities for enhancing subregional and regional cooperation in the implementation of the Convention, and the various approaches to legislative and regulatory implementation that can serve to address security issues.

OBJECTIVE 3: STRENGTHEN CONTROLS OVER CROSS-BORDER TRANSFERS OF TOXIC CHEMICALS TO PREVENT ACCESS TO SUCH CHEMICALS, INCLUDING BY NON-STATE ACTORS, FOR PURPOSES PROHIBITED UNDER THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION

Training course on the transfers regime of the Chemical Weapons Convention, in cooperation with the World Customs Organization, online, 25 – 27 May 2021

26. Organised in partnership with the WCO, the course strengthened customs officers' monitoring skills in connection to chemical trade. Participants gained insight into the transfer provisions of the Convention, discussed transfer scenarios with experts from the OPCW and the WCO, identified best practices in exercising effective control over trade in toxic chemicals, and shared experiences in implementing national training programmes in the enforcement of trade controls.
27. Participants also discussed various aspects of cross-border trade control, including licensing, risk management, and physical inspection of chemicals, as well as causes for discrepancies in reporting imports and exports of toxic chemicals.
28. Seventeen participants from 10 African States Parties participated in this global course: Algeria, Ghana, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Nigeria, South Africa, the Sudan, Uganda, and Zambia.

Course for analytical chemists from laboratories supporting customs services, online, 4 – 15 October 2021

29. The aim of the course is to assist qualified analytical chemists from laboratories that support, or plan to support, customs services or offices in acquiring further experience and practical knowledge of the analysis of chemicals related to the Convention. In addition, the course will facilitate the adoption of good laboratory practices for the implementation of the Convention.
30. Conducted by the OPCW Laboratory, the course will accommodate participants from all regions, including Africa. It will be funded through a voluntary contribution from the United States of America.

Training course for representatives of customs training institutions from Africa on the transfers regime of the Chemical Weapons Convention, online, 8 – 10 December 2021

31. The objective of the course is to build the capacities of national customs administrations in the Africa region to train their customs officers on the Convention's transfers regime relating to scheduled chemicals, as well as on a number of practical issues related to the role of customs authorities in controlling the trade in toxic chemicals.
32. The course is primarily intended for African customs officers who, within their respective customs administrations, are in charge of training activities encompassing various strategic trade control enforcement issues, including those related to the implementation of the Convention. The course will be conducted in English, with simultaneous interpretation into French.

OBJECTIVE 4: ENHANCE PROTECTION AND RESPONSE CAPABILITIES AGAINST CHEMICAL INCIDENTS AND ATTACKS

Basic training course on the Wireless Information System for Emergency Responders and use of the Emergency Response Guidebook for first responders from States Parties in the Southern African Development Community, online, 2 and 3 March 2021

33. This online training course was conducted by the OPCW and the Population Protection Institute of the Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic. The attendees learned how to accurately characterise and rapidly contain chemical incidents, and familiarised themselves with the Emergency Response Guidebook (ERG) and the Wireless Information System for Emergency Responders (WISER), which are key evaluation tools and sources of information on hazardous substances, protective distance plotting, and containment.
34. The course was attended by 24 professionals from nine OPCW Member States in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region: Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, South Africa, the United Republic of Tanzania, and Zimbabwe, in addition to an observer from Nigeria.
35. The course was also an opportunity to update the SADC countries regarding the Online Self-Assessment Tool assistance and protection project, being conducted by the Secretariat for the Member States of the subregion, with the financial and technical support of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and to coordinate and galvanise more support for its implementation.

International course on reconnaissance and sampling operations in a highly contaminated environment, online, 15 – 19 March 2021

36. The course was conducted by the OPCW in partnership with the Defence Science and Technology Organization from Pakistan. Participants enhanced their knowledge of theoretical and practical aspects of detection, identification, sampling, and decontamination techniques in highly contaminated environments. The course also covered safety measures.

37. The course was attended by a total of 182 emergency responders from 41 Member States, including 47 African participants from the following 13 countries: Algeria, Angola, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Lesotho, Mauritania, Morocco, Nigeria, South Africa, the Sudan, Togo, the United Republic of Tanzania, and Zimbabwe.

Basic training course on the Wireless Information System for Emergency Responders and the use of Emergency Response Guidebook for first responders from States Parties in the Economic Community of West African States, online, 28 – 29 April 2021

38. The training was conducted with the technical support and facilitation of the Population Protection Institute of the Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic. It equipped the participants with the knowledge necessary to mount an effective response to chemical emergencies, provided a platform for information and experience sharing, and strengthened the regional network of experts involved in chemical emergency response.
39. Participants familiarised themselves with ERG and WISER, which are key evaluation tools and sources of information on hazardous substances, protective distance plotting, and containment.
40. The course was attended by 18 professionals from nine OPCW Member States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS): Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo.

Training course on incident response operations and sample management of chemical incidents for Member States of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development region, online, 25 – 27 May 2021

41. Participants learned about the detection, identification, sampling, and decontamination techniques required for reconnaissance and sampling operations in highly contaminated environments. The course also covered safety measures and the procedures necessary to manage a response from the scene of an incident.
42. Conducted in partnership with the Population Protection Institute of the Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic, the course was attended by 29 experts from four OPCW Member States from the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) region: Ethiopia, Kenya, the Sudan, and Uganda.

Coordination Meeting on the “Assistance and Protection Project for the Southern African Development Community” (2020-2021), online, 1 June 2021

43. Funded and technically supported by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the project aims at setting up a new Online Self-Assessment Tool that will help Member States, initially from the SADC region, to assess the risks posed by hazardous chemicals, audit existing response capacities, and identify necessary improvement measures, including those the OPCW may help to build. The outcome is to also feed future national (and subregional) capacity building under Article X of the Convention. South Africa has been championing the project in the SADC region.

44. The questionnaire forming the underlying basis of the new tool was drafted earlier in 2021. The coordination meeting held on 1 June allowed the circulation of this draft questionnaire to the SADC region, for peer review and finalisation. The roll-out of the online platform has been scheduled for the autumn of 2021.

Basic course on decontamination of chemical warfare agents and toxic industrial chemicals for emergency first responders of African Member States, online, 13 – 15 July 2021

45. This was the first OPCW training on decontamination for the Organisation's Member States in Africa. The training was conducted by the OPCW and instructors from the Special Risks Brigade of the Argentine Federal Police, as part of the OPCW's Instructor Development and Exchange Programme.
46. The participants enhanced their theoretical knowledge on how to develop and implement decontamination procedures and techniques as well as Hospital Preparedness for Chemical Incidents (HOSPREP), including victim triage systems in the aftermath of incidents involving chemical warfare agents and toxic industrial chemicals. The first responders also discussed their experiences of chemical decontamination and were provided with an overview of the Convention, focusing on the Article X on assistance and protection measures necessary to manage incidents directly at the scene.
47. The course was attended by 61 experts from 19 OPCW 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.

Training course on conducting sampling and analysis in a highly contaminated environment for African Member States, online, 27 – 29 July 2021

48. This online course was conducted jointly with the National Institute of Forensic Science and Criminology of the Gendarmerie Nationale of Algeria.
49. The participants learned about theoretical and practical aspects of detection, identification, sampling, and decontamination techniques used during reconnaissance and sampling operations in highly contaminated environments. The course also covered safety measures and procedures necessary during emergencies and a presentation of a simulated intervention involving recognition and sampling with full personal protection equipment.
50. The course was attended by 47 experts from 17 OPCW African Member States: Algeria, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Seychelles, Togo, and Uganda.

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 Member States, online, 18 – 20 August 2021

51. The course was jointly organised by the Secretariat and the Population Protection Institute of the Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic. It was designed for both civilian and military first responders who are involved in responding to emergencies involving release of chemical warfare agents or toxic industrial chemicals, and also focused on CBRN¹ emergency preparedness.
52. Participants learned how to accurately characterise and rapidly contain incidents involving hazardous chemicals, using ERG and WISER. They also acquired relevant knowledge in the areas of initial isolation and protective distance plotting and containment.
53. The training was attended by 24 professionals from 13 French-speaking African Member States: Benin, Burundi, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Senegal, Seychelles, Togo, and Tunisia.

Webinar for African Member States on chemical security response measures and emergency response arrangements for major public events, online, 22 and 23 September 2021

54. This webinar will focus, inter alia, on strengthening the resilience of African Member States to develop, review, or amend national risk and threat assessments when considering event venues, and to develop appropriate contingency and emergency response plans for terrorist attacks on a State Party planning to host a large sporting tournament.
55. The webinar will accommodate both civilian and military first responders from African Member States who are involved in responding to emergencies involving releases of chemical warfare agents or toxic industrial chemicals and on CBRN emergency preparedness.

Workshop for women first responders in chemical emergencies, online, 23 and 24 September 2021

56. Building on the success of the OPCW Women in Chemistry Symposium, the Secretariat is launching a new workshop for women first responders in chemical emergencies.
57. The first workshop is scheduled to gather fifty female first responders from all regions, including Africa, to exchange experience in the field of chemical emergency response. The discussion is expected to advise the Secretariat on how to better ensure that gender perspectives are integrated in the design of training in this field.

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

Course for African Member States on deterrence and prevention of the use of chemical weapons and toxic industrial chemicals, from a law enforcement officer's perspective, online and in person (Italy), 8 November 2021 – 6 May 2022

58. The course aims at enhancing the knowledge of law enforcement officers from African Member States with respect to on-site incident management. This involves applying the most innovative techniques to deter and prevent toxic industrial chemicals and chemical equipment from being used to create chemical weapons.
59. The objectives of the course are to provide the law enforcement officers with a scientific method of analysis, evidence collection, and documentation process of the incident. These methods will help to maintain the chain of custody, allowing the officers to produce admissible evidence for prosecution if necessary.
60. The course consists of three modules. The first and second modules are scheduled to be delivered online from 8 to 28 November 2021 and from 17 to 25 February 2022. The third module will be delivered in a face-to-face format from 2 to 6 May 2022, in Italy, should the COVID-19 pandemic situation allow.

Translation of selected online assistance and protection courses, 2021

61. With support from France, the Secretariat is securing the translation into French of selected online assistance and protection courses that will benefit French-speaking Member States in the Africa region, among others.

Course on chemical emergency response for States Parties in West Africa, 2022

62. Discussions are ongoing between the Secretariat, the Permanent Representation of France to the OPCW, the National Authority of Côte d'Ivoire, and the International Counter-Terrorism Academy in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, to co-organise an in-person course on chemical emergency response in 2022.
63. Funded through a voluntary contribution from France, the course will support the Secretariat's efforts aimed at developing the capacities of first responders and emergency planners in French-speaking States Parties in West Africa to respond to chemical attacks or incidents that may be the result of terrorist acts in the region.

OBJECTIVE 5: ADVANCE CHEMICAL SAFETY AND SECURITY CULTURE, STANDARDS, AND PRACTICES IN AFRICA

Course on legislative and regulatory issues of chemical security for African Member States, online, 19 – 22 April 2021

64. Organised in the framework of the OPCW's efforts to counter the growing risk of misuse of chemicals in Africa, the course benefited 48 representatives of 12 African Member States (Angola, Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Africa, the Sudan, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, and Zimbabwe) and was conducted in partnership with the International Council of Chemical Associations, the International Chemical Trade Association, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, and INTERPOL.

65. The course enhanced the capacities of participants to analyse their respective national legal and regulatory frameworks on chemical security, including identifying gaps and potential means to address them, and discussed approaches to developing appropriate chemical security measures.
66. Participants completed specific training modules, provided information on their national legal frameworks on chemical security, and attended an interactive online session. In addition, they learned about the existing international legal framework on chemical security, as well as the potential scope of a comprehensive national legislative and regulatory framework on chemical security.

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

67. The course assisted in building participants' skills in chemical engineering and industrial management, with a focus on chemical safety and security.
68. Six new participants from the following African Member States benefited from this course: Cameroon, Ethiopia, Nigeria, the Sudan, Uganda, and the United Republic of Tanzania. They joined 12 other participants from Africa selected since last year from Botswana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, the Niger, Sierra Leone, Somalia, and Zambia.

Workshop on general aspects of chemical safety and security in laboratories, online, 8 – 10 June 2021

69. This global workshop was organised in partnership with Italy. Laboratory professionals from, inter alia, three African States Parties learned about valuable best practices in relation to chemical safety and security in laboratories. They also tested response skills in scenarios involving hazardous chemicals.

Launch event on the Indicative Guidelines for Chemical Safety and Security in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises to Foster the Peaceful Uses of Chemistry, online, 29 June 2021

70. Developed by international experts in collaboration with the Secretariat, the indicative guidelines incorporate basic elements, legal frameworks, and selected institutional and technical capacities that can help to achieve chemical safety and security.
71. The guidelines build on the resources, tools, and guidance developed by international organisations dealing with public health and the environmental and safety aspects of chemicals.
72. The launch event accommodated a global audience, including 30 participants from nine African Member States: Algeria, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Madagascar, Nigeria, Seychelles, Togo, and Zambia.
73. Following the introduction of the guidelines, experts from Brazil, China, Germany, Italy, and the United States of America, as well as from relevant international organisations and the chemical industry, shared their knowledge and experiences on the

subject. Representatives of the International Council of Chemical Associations, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and the United Nations Environment Programme also attended the launch.

Advanced chemical safety and security management course for Member States in the Africa region, online, 2 July 2021

74. The online training expanded participants' knowledge of national chemical management strategies. This knowledge will assist governments in creating national action plans on chemical safety and security management.
75. The participants reviewed the resources, tools, and skills needed to effectively promote chemical safety and security standards. They learned about supply chain safety and security strategies designed to prevent the misuse of highly toxic chemicals and to minimise internal and external threats. The workshop also included a table-top exercise based around the scenario of a chemical accident at a storage site.
76. The training course accommodated 29 experts from 12 African Member States: Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nigeria, Seychelles, the Sudan, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

Workshop on chemical security management for Nigeria, online, September or October 2021 (date to be confirmed)

77. As part of its efforts to mitigate the threat of attacks involving chemical weapons or toxic chemicals by non-State actors, the Secretariat will organise an online training workshop for participants from Nigeria in the month of September or early October 2021.
78. The workshop is focused on mitigating security vulnerabilities in the chemical supply chain in Nigeria for Nigerian stakeholders who are dealing with high-risk chemicals and supply chain security.
79. Up to 25 participants will be accommodated in this online workshop, which will be funded through a financial voluntary contribution from the United States of America.

Course on explosion protection and error management in the chemical process industries for OPCW Member States, online, 6 September – 8 October 2021

80. This annual course will be offered by the University of Wuppertal (Germany), with the financial support of the Government of Germany. Scheduled to be held online, the training aims at equipping the participants with the skills required to implement modern technical safety practices and to fulfil their responsibilities to develop sustainable safety management related to the chemical industry. Moreover, participants will be encouraged to contribute to the development of a culture of safety in their working environments.

Course on legislative and regulatory issues of chemical security for French-speaking African Member States, online, 16 – 21 October 2021

81. Organised in the framework of the OPCW's efforts to counter the growing risk of misuse of chemicals in Africa, the course will be offered to French-speaking African Member States and will be conducted in partnership with the International Council of Chemical Associations, the International Chemical Trade Association, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, and INTERPOL.
82. The online course is expected to enhance the capacities of participants at analysing their respective national legal and regulatory frameworks on chemical security, including identifying gaps and potential means to address them, and discuss approaches at developing appropriate chemical security measures.

OPCW Associate Programme 2021, The Hague, the Netherlands, 18 October – 5 November 2021

83. Scheduled to take place in a face-to-face format in The Hague, the new edition of the OPCW Associate Programme is to accommodate participants from various geographical regions, including from Africa, who were selected for and attended the intersessional online training activities for the Associate Programme in 2020 and 2021.
84. The programme will enhance participants' knowledge of the Convention and will develop the skills they need to operate in a modern chemistry industry environment, with a focus on chemical safety and security.

OBJECTIVE 6: STRENGTHEN THE CAPABILITIES OF CHEMICAL LABORATORIES IN AFRICA

85. In 2021, the Secretariat continued implementing the Project on Assessing and Enhancing Capacity of Analytical Laboratories from African and GRULAC² Member States, funded by a voluntary contribution from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
86. In the framework of this project, a series of remote training and coaching activities and support to assisted laboratories' participation in OPCW testing exercises have been provided during the year. In this context, the two participating laboratories—from Kenya and Nigeria—took part in the following events (paragraphs 87 to 91):

Coaching workshop in support of the participation of assisted laboratories from the Africa and GRULAC regions in OPCW proficiency testing, online, 21 January 2021

87. Delivered by the Finnish Institute for Verification of the Chemical Weapons Convention (VERIFIN), the online workshop accommodated, inter alia, 14 analytical chemists from the two participating laboratories from Kenya and Nigeria.

² GRULAC = Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Coaching workshop in support of the participation of assisted laboratories from the Africa and GRULAC regions in OPCW proficiency testing, online, 19 February 2021

88. Also delivered by VERIFIN, this workshop accommodated, inter alia, 15 analytical chemists from the two participating laboratories from Kenya and Nigeria.

Capacity-building course for laboratories from Member States in Africa that aspire to join the OPCW network of designated laboratories, online, 15 to 19 March 2021

89. Conducted in collaboration with VERIFIN, the course accommodated 17 African analytical chemists from Kenya and Nigeria, with a view to building their laboratories' capacity to join the OPCW designated laboratory network.
90. The course focused on the advanced strategies and procedures required to pass OPCW designated laboratory proficiency tests—the primary requirement for laboratories to obtain and maintain OPCW designation.

Workshop to review progress and agreed next steps for laboratories from Member States in the Africa and GRULAC regions towards achieving OPCW designated laboratory status, online, 8 April 2021

91. Eighteen analytical chemists, including four from Kenya and Nigeria, participated in the event, representing the following eight OPCW Member States: Brazil, Chile, Finland, Germany, Kenya, Nigeria, Spain, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The workshop was also attended by four observers from Brazil's National Authority, as well as experts from the Secretariat. The workshop participants evaluated their experiences from 2020-2021, discussed further training needs, and agreed on the 2021-2022 workplan.

Course on the enhancement of laboratory skills in chemical weapons-related laboratory quality management in collaboration with VERIFIN, online, 23 – 27 August 2021

92. Organised jointly with VERIFIN, the course was held online for analytical chemists from various regions, including Africa. As part of the training, the quality standard for testing laboratories (general requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories, ISO/IEC 17025:2017) was studied in detail. The standard was examined through lectures and practical exercises. Prior to the course, the participants were asked to provide information on the quality assurance system in their laboratory and provide their current laboratory quality manual, if they already had one. The aim was for participants to continue working with their own quality manual or to start to prepare one during the course. African participants hailed from Cameroon and Nigeria.

Online course on the enhancement of laboratory skills in liquid chromatography-mass spectrometry, in collaboration with VERIFIN, online, 23 – 27 August 2021

93. Organised jointly with VERIFIN and targeting all regions including Africa, the course aimed at improving participants' practical skills in analysing chemicals related to the Convention through liquid chromatography-mass spectrometry (LC-MS). The training covered sample preparation and the theoretical aspects of LC and LC-MS and demonstrations of LC and LC-MS techniques, and included practical exercises. This course was offered in parallel with the aforementioned course on laboratory quality management, scheduled for the same dates. African participants hailed from Kenya and Namibia.

Analytical chemistry skills development course for the Africa region, online, 6 – 17 September 2021

94. Organised jointly with the Protechnik Laboratories, Pretoria, South Africa, the course is designed to offer comprehensive theoretical and practical training in analysis using gas chromatography (GC) and gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (GC-MS), pre-eminent analytical techniques in separating, identifying, and quantifying compounds in complex mixtures relevant to the Convention.
95. The course focuses on samples preparation and handling, operating analytical instruments, and applying various GC and MS techniques. Exercises are supported by lectures on the physical-chemical properties of chemical warfare agents, quality control, safety, health, and environmental protection related to working in chemical laboratories, and the handling of toxic chemicals.
96. In addition, the course provided the participants with an overview of the Convention and developed their understanding of the important role science plays in the effective implementation of the Convention.

Analytical skills development course for women chemists, online, 4 – 15 October 2021

97. Funded through a voluntary contribution from the European Union and offered by the OPCW Laboratory, the course is designed to equip female analytical chemists from various regions, including Africa, with the basic knowledge and practical skills needed to use techniques related to the analysis of chemicals subject to the Convention.
98. The course will also promote competitiveness, highlight career opportunities for women, and strengthen the role and participation of female scientists in the implementation of the Convention.

Equipment Exchange Programme

99. As part of its contribution to strengthening laboratory infrastructure in African Member States, in the framework of the OPCW Equipment Exchange Programme, the Secretariat completed the transfers of two sets of laboratory equipment donated by Germany to the United Republic of Tanzania³ and the Sudan.⁴
100. The equipment donated reached the United Republic of Tanzania and the Sudan respectively in December 2020 and April 2021. In the latter part of 2021 (tentatively), the Secretariat plans to conduct a training activity for the United Republic of Tanzania on the transferred equipment mentioned above.

OBJECTIVE 7: PROMOTE KNOWLEDGE OF PEACEFUL CHEMISTRY AND ITS EXCHANGE IN AFRICA

Forum for the Africa region on the peaceful uses of chemistry, “New Norms for OPCW Capacity-Building Programmes After the COVID-19 Pandemic”, online, 1 April 2021

101. As part of the OPCW efforts to facilitate knowledge exchange in Africa in areas of peaceful chemistry, on 1 April the Secretariat organised the first forum on peaceful uses of chemistry fully dedicated to Africa. The meeting helped establish the next steps for the OPCW’s capacity-building programmes for the continent in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.
102. The forum allowed the participants to share lessons learned and best practices related to the delivery of online capacity-building programmes in the challenging circumstances of the pandemic. The attendees also identified needs, gaps, and actionable proposals to overcome these obstacles.
103. The participants benefited from the expertise of experienced professionals from three OPCW Member States (Algeria, the Niger, and the Sudan), the University of Wuppertal in Germany, and the Secretariat.
104. The forum was attended by 37 participants from government agencies, academia, and the chemical industry in 12 African Member States: Algeria, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, the Niger, Nigeria, Uganda, Sierra Leone, and the Sudan.

³ Perstorp Analytical NIR systems, including auto-sampler, complete personal computer, spare parts, documentation, milling device (Brabander), and glassware for analysis; Omnilab, Foodalyt D1000 automated distillation; 10 desktop computers; flame photometer 410 Sherwood; and SAN SYSTEM – continuous flow analyser system, including auto-sampler and complete desktop computer.

⁴ One GC-MS system.

Fifth edition of the OPCW's Women in Chemistry Symposium "Fostering a Culture of Promoting Peaceful Uses of Chemistry", online, 1 July 2021

105. The global symposium, financially supported by the European Union, was dedicated to promoting equal roles and opportunities for women in the peaceful application of chemistry.
106. The participants discussed how to engage more women in the international endeavour to prevent the re-emergence of chemical weapons and to bring the benefits of peaceful chemistry to all. Participants exchanged ideas on how to forge networks of support and cooperation to build their knowledge and skills for positions in international organisations, government, industry, and academia.
107. The Secretariat presented an overview of the Organisation's activity in support of gender mainstreaming and highlighted opportunities for women to join the OPCW's capacity-building programmes. It also collected feedback that will help in designing new initiatives for female professionals.
108. Forty-two female scientists from the following 18 African Member States took part in the symposium: Algeria, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Morocco, Nigeria, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Togo, and Zambia.

Support for scientific conferences

109. Through the OPCW Conference Support Programme, the Secretariat helps finance scientific conferences on topics relevant to the Convention in developing countries and those with economies in transition. It supports the participation of scientists, who may not, due to their economic, geographic, or academic position, be able to attend such conferences.
110. In 2021, the Secretariat provided sponsorship under this programme to two scientific events held in Italy and Mauritius. Together, these events accommodated, inter alia, 137 scientists from Africa.

Green Chemistry Postgraduate Summer School, online, 4 – 10 July 2021

111. The summer school was organised by the Green Sciences for Sustainable Development Foundation (Italy) and the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry. The event helped disseminate good, advanced, and basic chemical sciences and scientific know-how for students' future professional careers, indicating green chemistry as a fundamental tool to approach pollutant reduction at source.
112. The Secretariat sponsored the participation of 64 participants in this event, including 37 African scientists from Algeria (2), Cameroon (2), the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya (3), Morocco (3), Nigeria (6), Rwanda, South Africa (8), Tunisia (2), Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe (4).

Virtual conference on chemistry and its applications, University of Mauritius (online), 9 – 13 August 2021

113. This virtual conference was designed to provide an online platform for participants to present, share, and discuss recent findings of their research, covering all topics related to chemistry and interdisciplinary sciences. The Secretariat sponsored the participation of 100 experts in total, including 80 participants from Africa.

Support for fellowships

114. The Fellowship Programme assists scientists and engineers from States Parties whose economies are developing or in transition to gain experience by working in more advanced research laboratories and facilities in other States Parties for a limited period of time. A key objective of this Programme is to facilitate the exchange of scientific and technical information, while at the same time strengthening the institutions in the targeted countries through capacity building.
115. Under the Fellowship Programme, as at the date of the drafting of this report, the following five fellowships benefiting African scientists had been scheduled for sponsorship by the Secretariat in 2021:
- (a) a fellowship for a chemist from Zimbabwe is scheduled to take place at the Spiez Laboratory in Switzerland from 30 August to 26 November 2021;
 - (b) a fellowship for a chemist from Cameroon is scheduled to take place in Germany from 15 October 2021 to 14 January 2022;
 - (c) a fellowship for a chemist from Nigeria is scheduled to take place in South Africa from 15 October 2021 to 14 January 2022;
 - (d) a fellowship for a chemist from Uganda is scheduled to take place in Germany from 1 November 2021 to 31 January 2022; and
 - (e) a fellowship for a chemist from Uganda is scheduled to take place at VERIFIN, Helsinki, Finland, from 1 November 2021 to 30 April 2022.
116. In addition, the following fellowships, which were selected for sponsorship in 2020, are scheduled to take place in 2022:
- (a) a fellowship for a chemist from Nigeria in the United States of America is scheduled to take place from 17 January to 16 April 2022; and
 - (b) a fellowship for a chemist from Uganda in South Africa is scheduled to take place from 25 February to 24 May 2022.
117. Furthermore, in view of COVID-19 restrictions, dates are to be determined for three additional approved fellowships: one fellowship from Cameroon in Germany, one fellowship from Cameroon in Spain, and one fellowship from Nigeria in Argentina.

Support for research projects

118. Under the Programme for Support of Research Projects, the Secretariat has continued during the reporting period to extend its financial support to small-scale research projects in Member States in Africa, among other regions, in order to promote the development of scientific and technical knowledge in chemistry for industrial, agricultural, research, medical, pharmaceutical, and other peaceful purposes relevant to the Convention in the continent. Funding for such projects has been provided either solely by the OPCW or jointly with the IFS, based in Stockholm, Sweden.
119. In this context, as at the cut-off date of this Note, in 2021 the Secretariat has been sponsoring four ongoing African research projects (from Kenya, South Africa, Tunisia, and Uganda) and co-funding eight others with the IFS (Benin (2), Côte d'Ivoire (2), Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda, and Zimbabwe).

OBJECTIVE 8: FOSTER PROGRAMME VISIBILITY, STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT, AND PARTNERSHIPS

120. One of the major innovations of the fifth phase of the Africa Programme is the special attention dedicated to promoting the engagement of Convention stakeholders and their ownership of the Programme. An important enabler in this regard is the promotion in Africa of the visibility and understanding of the Programme, the Convention, and the work of the Organisation.
121. The following activities have been undertaken by the Secretariat during the reporting period, with a view to continuing to address this specific objective of the Programme:

Course on “WMD⁵ Non-Proliferation and Security for Women in STEM⁶ in Africa”, online, 25 January – 5 February 2021

122. The Secretariat participated with resource experts in an intensive course on WMD non-proliferation and security for women in STEM. Held from 25 January to 5 February 2021, the course was organised by the African Centre for Science and International Security (Ghana), jointly with the James Martin Center for Non-Proliferation Studies and the Middlebury Institute of International Studies (United States of America). It was sponsored by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.
123. Using the Zoom platform, the course gathered over 60 CBRN security experts from government, academia, and research centres from across Africa.
124. Experts from the Secretariat made presentations during two panels, entitled “CBRN Security in Africa” and “The Role of Women in Chemical Security”. During these presentations, which were followed by in-depth discussions, the Secretariat highlighted the efforts of the OPCW in terms of addressing the needs and priorities of African

⁵ WMD = weapons of mass destruction.

⁶ STEM = science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Member States in relation to the Convention through the Africa Programme, as well as in terms of ensuring that the gender perspective is integrated across OPCW activities in general.

125. The OPCW participation in this event was highly appreciated by organisers and participants alike. It was highly beneficial in the sense that it ensured further outreach and visibility of the OPCW efforts vis-à-vis the Africa region and the female chemists and scientists.

Consultations and knowledge-sharing session on the OPCW Africa Programme, with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and the Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit, online, 13 April 2021

126. UNODA and the BWC-ISU reached out to the Secretariat in April 2021 to gain more in-depth knowledge about the OPCW Africa Programme, as they regard it as an interesting model for a new “Biosecurity Signature Initiative for Africa”. The BWC-ISU has been approached by the Global Partnership as to whether it could facilitate the coordination of such a signature initiative. The detailed briefing offered on 13 April by the Secretariat to the BWC-ISU and UNODA representatives in response to their request was highly appreciated.

OPCW Africa Network

127. During the reporting period, the Secretariat has continued to maintain and further develop the membership and activities of the OPCW Africa Network, notably through targeted outreach to suitable candidates, facilitation of regular interaction in the Network, and sharing with African chemists of relevant information, knowledge, and expertise, as well as training and professional opportunities. The outreach efforts undertaken by the Secretariat led to the increase in membership of the Network to more than 850 active members as at mid-August 2021.

OPCW Africa Bulletin

128. The annual OPCW Africa Bulletin is one of the innovations incorporated in the concept of the fifth phase of the Africa Programme. The Bulletin is designed for sensitisation and information purposes, dissemination of educational materials, and showcasing progress and success stories in the Programme. The second edition of the Bulletin is to be issued in November 2021 as planned.

Continued alumni engagement through post-participation action plans

129. The Secretariat has continued in 2021 to send individual post-participation action plans to the alumni of capacity-building activities organised under the fifth phase of the Africa Programme. Copies of these plans were also addressed to the National Authorities and Permanent Representations of the alumni, for their records and continued follow-up.

Partnerships

130. During the reporting period, the Secretariat has continued to cooperate with a variety of partners for the conduct of projects and activities under the Africa Programme and for the continuous exploration of new joint initiatives.
131. As highlighted in various parts of this Annex, the list of partners includes international, regional, and national organisations, academia, laboratories, and chemical industries.
132. Furthermore, following the productive meeting held with the AU-PAPS in December 2020, the Secretariat maintained follow-up contacts with the AU-PAPS during the reporting period, with a view to revitalising the OPCW-African Union cooperation, along the lines of the action plan the Secretariat proposed in the December 2020 meeting.
133. Separately, in 2021 the Secretariat has also continued to collaborate with several donors under the Africa Programme. While funded essentially from the OPCW regular budget, in 2021 the Africa Programme has benefited from generous voluntary contributions from the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and the European Union (as at 31 August 2021).

Annex 2

OVERVIEW OF KEY ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE FIFTH PHASE OF THE OPCW AFRICA PROGRAMME FROM 1 SEPTEMBER TO 31 DECEMBER 2020

OBJECTIVE 1: ADVANCE NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION IN AFRICA & OBJECTIVE 2: ENHANCE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL AUTHORITIES

General training course on the Chemical Weapons Convention for the personnel of National Authorities and relevant stakeholders in French-speaking Member States in Central and West Africa, online, 7 - 9 September 2020

1. The programme was offered online to National Authorities' staff with little or no previous experience of implementing the Convention, with a view to enhancing their knowledge and skills related to the effective implementation of the Convention.
2. The training consisted of video presentations on various aspects of implementation of the Convention, including States Parties' obligations, the functions and responsibilities of National Authorities, and best practices for developing strong stakeholder networks. Participants also had the opportunity to take part in a live questions and answers session, as well as a practical exercise on the new Electronic Declaration Information System (EDIS). The course accommodated representatives from Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Mauritius, the Niger, Togo, and Tunisia.

Second meeting of the Steering Committee of the OPCW Africa Programme, online, 16 November 2020

3. Chaired by H.E. Ambassador Kamal Bashir Ahmed Mohamed Khair, Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the OPCW and Committee Chairperson, the meeting was attended by the Permanent Representations and National Authorities of Algeria, Angola, Cameroon, Kenya, Morocco, Rwanda, South Africa, and the Sudan. Participants also included the following Committee observers: the Czech Republic, Germany, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and the European Union.
4. During the meeting, the Secretariat updated the Committee on the implementation of the fifth phase of the Africa Programme since the Committee's inaugural meeting on 26 June 2020. The update involved key developments in the Programme, including capacity-building events that were delivered during the reporting period. In addition, the Secretariat shared with the Committee the full findings of the impact assessment of capacity-building activities organised under the Africa Programme in 2019.
5. The Steering Committee commended the progress achieved in the Programme implementation despite the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. H.E. Ambassador Joseph Manso, Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the OPCW, announced a voluntary contribution from the United States of

America of USD 110,000 to fully fund the extra-budgetary project proposed earlier by the Secretariat, entitled “Specialised Course for African Customs Laboratories” and to increase the preparedness of hospitals in the East African subregion to respond to chemical incidents.

Seventh annual meeting of representatives of the chemical industry and National Authorities of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, online, 17 and 18 November 2020

6. The central theme of this meeting was how the chemical industry and National Authorities could collaborate more effectively on the successful implementation of the Convention.
7. Representatives of 38 Member States participated in the meeting, including from Africa: Burundi, Côte d’Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, the Sudan, and Tunisia. Sixteen chemical industry representatives were also in attendance.
8. Participants shared experiences about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on national implementation of the Convention. Discussions also covered ways of enhancing the resilience of the industry verification regime (Article VI) and cooperation between stakeholders. Representatives from the International Council of Chemical Associations and the International Chemical Trade Association provided insights into addressing pandemic-related verification challenges from a global industry and trade perspective.

Briefing on the Convention for non-Hague based Permanent Representations, online, 18 November 2020

9. As part of this event, which is held annually, the Secretariat provided a briefing on the status of implementation of the Convention, as well as the various OPCW capacity-building programmes designed to support the national implementation of the Convention. Representatives from 24 States Parties attended, including African Permanent Representations based in Brussels.
10. In addition, the Secretariat updated African States Parties, inter alia, on the implementation of the Africa Programme in 2020. The update, which was well received, galvanised additional support to the Programme on the part of the participating delegations.

Twenty-Second Annual Meeting of National Authorities, online, 23 – 25 November 2020

11. Held online, the meeting brought together 165 representatives from 94 Member States, including from the Africa region. It provided an opportunity for global knowledge sharing and dialogue on aspects related to the implementation of the Convention.
12. Participants were briefed on the latest OPCW developments and capacity-building activities in the areas of national implementation, verification, and assistance and protection, as well as peaceful uses of chemistry.

OBJECTIVE 3: STRENGTHEN CONTROLS OVER CROSS-BORDER TRANSFERS OF TOXIC CHEMICALS TO PREVENT ACCESS TO SUCH CHEMICALS, INCLUDING BY NON-STATE ACTORS, FOR PURPOSES PROHIBITED UNDER THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION

Joint OPCW-WCO online training course on the Convention's transfers regime of scheduled chemicals for customs officials, online, 14 – 18 September 2020

13. The course was organised jointly by the OPCW and the WCO and involved over 100 customs officers from 38 Member States, including 34 participants from the following 10 African States Parties: Algeria, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritania, Mauritius, Nigeria, South Africa, Togo, Tunisia, and Uganda.
14. The course contributed to strengthening the capacity of participating Member States to implement the Convention's provisions related to the transfer of scheduled chemicals. Customs officers were provided with an in-depth understanding of the relevant provisions, the tools to identify toxic chemicals, and approaches to handling suspicious chemical shipments. Through 10 e-learning modules from the WCO training platform, the course also covered procedures for reporting the import and export of scheduled chemicals, as well as practical advice on implementing those procedures. The customs officers took part in a scenario-based exercise, as well as live sessions during which international experts provided additional technical guidance and answered detailed questions.

OBJECTIVE 4: ENHANCE PROTECTION AND RESPONSE CAPABILITIES AGAINST CHEMICAL INCIDENTS AND ATTACKS

Basic training on the use of the Wireless Information System for Emergency Responders and the Emergency Response Guidebook for first responders from States Parties in the East African Community, online, 19 and 20 October 2020

15. The training streamlined the capacity of participating first responders from EAC States Parties to quickly and accurately characterise and contain incidents involving hazardous chemicals during the initial response phase, as well as to acquire basic knowledge and skills on the use of WISER and ERG. The course helped demonstrate how WISER and ERG could provide a wide range of information on hazardous substances, including hazard identification, protective distance plotting, and containment.
16. The event was attended by 30 participants from 14 African States Parties: Burundi, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, the Sudan, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, and Zambia. It was organised with the technical support and co-facilitation of the Population Protection Institute of the Czech Republic.

Regional table-top exercise on chemical emergency response for the Economic Community of West African States, online, 16 and 17 November 2020

17. Conducted jointly with the Higher Institute of Civil Protection Studies, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, the exercise accommodated 32 emergency management planners and first response team leaders from OPCW Member States in the ECOWAS region, namely Benin, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, and Togo. An observer from Kenya was also present.
18. The table-top exercise tested the effectiveness of operational and decision-making frameworks, communication strategies, and information sharing methods at the national, regional, and international levels of handling chemical incidents. The participants worked through a crisis scenario using OPCW decisions and policies on responding to chemical weapons use.

Launch meeting of the assistance and protection project for the Southern African Development Community, online, 23 November 2020

19. The Secretariat initiated in the fourth quarter of 2020, a project aimed at assisting Member States in the SADC region (16 countries) to identify critical needs related to their national protection against chemical weapons, through the assessment of existing chemical risks and response capacity at the national level. The project has two phases:
 - (a) Phase I: self-evaluation by the SADC Member States of their chemical risks and response capacity at the national level, using an Online Self-Assessment Tool to be developed by the Secretariat jointly with the Member States concerned; and
 - (b) Phase II: external evaluation phase, with a view to establishing a plan of activities to improve chemical response capacity.
20. The outcome is also destined to feed future national (and subregional) capacity building under Article X. The project benefits from voluntary funding and technical support of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. A ‘project roll-out’ meeting for SADC Member States was held on 23 November 2020.

Basic course on assistance and protection for Member States in the Intergovernmental Authority on Development region, online, 23 and 24 November 2020

21. Conducted jointly with the Sudanese National Authority, the course accommodated 24 participants from four OPCW Member States that are also members of the IGAD, namely, Ethiopia, Kenya, the Sudan, and Uganda.
22. The participants enhanced their knowledge of emergency response, protection, detection, monitoring, and decontamination operations, and developed skills in working in contaminated environments, as well as medical management of chemical casualties. In addition, the training developed basic knowledge in the effective use of incident command systems, as well as specialist applications such as WISER, ERG, and the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme.

Basic course on emergency response to chemical incidents for North Africa and the Sahel, online, 7 – 10 December 2020

23. Sixty-four representatives from the following eight Member States participated in the training: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mauritania, Morocco, Senegal, the Sudan, and Tunisia.
24. Organised jointly with the Government of Morocco, the training focused on responses during and after incidents involving chemical weapons and toxic industrial chemicals. The topics covered the use of protective equipment and sampling devices, as well as monitoring, detection, and decontamination operations in contaminated areas. Participants also discussed ways to improve regional cooperation, exchanged information and experiences regarding implementation of Article X of the Convention on assistance and protection, and learned about the support provided by the OPCW to its Member States under this Article.

Refresher course for instructors on chemical emergency response, planning, and management from Member States in the East African Community, online, 15 December 2020

25. Conducted in collaboration with and support of the Population Protection Institute of the Czech Republic's Fire Rescue Service, the course was attended by 12 participants from Burundi, Kenya, Uganda, and the United Republic of Tanzania.
26. The course targeted military CBRN specialists, fire and rescue instructors, and first responders who routinely share their expertise with less experienced colleagues in their home countries. It built on the competencies established during previous training activities provided by the OPCW in the areas of chemical emergency response, planning, and management.
27. Participants tested their presentation skills by providing lectures on types and effects of chemical weapons, as well as protection, sampling, and decontamination methods. They also learned about teaching strategies to implement as instructors.

OBJECTIVE 5: ADVANCE CHEMICAL SAFETY AND SECURITY CULTURE, STANDARDS, AND PRACTICES IN AFRICA

Wuppertal online course on explosion protection and error management, online, 7 – 30 September 2020

28. Funded by the Government of Germany, the course was organised online by the University of Wuppertal, Germany, in partnership with the OPCW. The course included e-learning and live sessions with experts from the University and benefited 24 participants from Member States in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean. A wide range of stakeholders participated, including representatives from governments, National Authorities, the chemical industry, and academia. African participants hailed from Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, the Gambia, Kenya, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

29. The course included five interactive sessions covering topics such as: explosion basics, assessment of explosion risks, safety characteristics of substances (gases, liquids, and dusts), hazardous areas classification, and explosion protection measures. During the practical section, a miniature model of a chemical reactor—the “Wuppertal mini-plant”—was used during interactive assignments.
30. Participants also attended two live online seminars developed by the University of Wuppertal and Human Factors Research and Training, a research institute from Ludwigsburg, Germany. The sessions covered individual-level and organisational aspects of error and error management.

Intersessional online training for the Twenty-First OPCW Associate Programme, 21 September – 2 October 2020

31. The training was offered online in view of the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic on the holding of in-person events. Forty participants learned about various safety and security aspects of the operational environment in chemical plants, acquired a range of chemical engineering and industrial management skills, and studied the Convention’s verification regime.
32. The training also included live sessions, interactive training modules, video lectures, assignments, quizzes, assessments, and interaction with Associate Programme alumni and other experts. The online session allowed for more in-depth discussion of the course topics, as well as further networking opportunities.
33. The 40 participants came from 38 Member States, including 18 from Africa: Botswana, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, the Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

OBJECTIVE 6: STRENGTHEN THE CAPABILITIES OF CHEMICAL LABORATORIES IN AFRICA

OPCW-VERIFIN combined courses on liquid chromatography-mass spectrometry and laboratory quality management, online, 7 – 11 September 2020

34. Jointly organised by the OPCW and VERIFIN, the combined courses focused on chemical analysis exercises relevant to the Convention, particularly the use of LC-MS, and laboratory quality management.
35. The courses included an overview of the OPCW and the Convention, including its verification provisions. They also covered sample preparation, quantification, compound identification, and laboratory quality management based on ISO 17025.
36. The combined courses accommodated seven Member States, including five from Africa: Morocco, Nigeria, Tunisia, Uganda, and the United Republic of Tanzania.

Equipment Exchange Programme

37. During the fourth quarter of 2020, the Secretariat facilitated, under the Equipment Exchange Programme, two transfers of laboratory equipment from Germany to the United Republic of Tanzania⁷ and the Sudan⁸. The transfer of the equipment destined for the United Republic of Tanzania was successfully finalised in December 2020.

OBJECTIVE 7: PROMOTE KNOWLEDGE OF PEACEFUL CHEMISTRY AND ITS EXCHANGE IN AFRICA

Support for scientific conferences

38. During the fourth quarter of 2020, the Secretariat supported the “Second Scientific International Conference on CBRNe – SICCC Series”, held from 10 to 12 December 2020. The SICCC Series Conference on CBRNe was the first scientific international conference series on safety and security issues in the CBRNe field. In this context, the Secretariat sponsored the participation of 50 scientists in total, including 20 African scientists from the following five Member States: Algeria, Madagascar, Nigeria, Tunisia, and Zambia.

Support for fellowships

39. Four fellowships sponsored by the OPCW were ongoing in the fourth quarter of 2020: two Algerian scientists in Finland (eight months); one Cameroonian fellow in Belgium (six months), and one Cameroonian fellow in Switzerland (eight months).

Support for research projects

40. In November 2020, the OPCW and IFS approved co-funding of eight new research projects by African scientists: Benin (2), Côte d’Ivoire (2), Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

OBJECTIVE 8: FOSTER PROGRAMME VISIBILITY, STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT, AND PARTNERSHIPS

OPCW Africa Network

41. The Secretariat continued to maintain and develop the Network through the facilitation of regular interaction, the exchange of knowledge and expertise, and professional networking. The outreach efforts undertaken by the Secretariat led to an increase in Network membership to 530 active members by the end of the reporting period.

⁷ Perstorp Analytical NIR systems, including auto-sampler, complete personal computer, spare parts, documentation, milling device (Brabander), and glassware for analysis; Omnilab, Foodalyt D1000 automated distillation; 10 desktop computers; flame photometer 410 Sherwood; and SAN SYSTEM – continuous flow analyser system, including auto-sampler and complete desktop computer.

⁸ One GC-MS system.

OPCW Africa Bulletin

42. In November 2020, the Secretariat issued the first edition of the OPCW Africa Bulletin, entitled: “The OPCW Africa Programme: Latest Developments and Outcome of the Recent Impact Assessment”. The feedback received by the Secretariat with regard to the Bulletin, including from Africa Programme stakeholders, was very positive. The Bulletin was also highly commended by the Programme Steering Committee at its meeting of 16 November 2020.

Continued alumni engagement through post-participation action plans

43. During the reporting period, the Secretariat continued to send individual post-participation action plans to the alumni of capacity-building activities organised under the fifth phase of the Africa Programme. Copies of these plans were also addressed to the respective National Authorities and Permanent Representations of the alumni, for their records and continued coordination and follow-up.

Partnerships

44. The Secretariat continued its cooperation with a variety of stakeholders for the organisation of activities under the Africa Programme and for the exploration of new initiatives. The list of partners includes international, regional, and national organisations. Valuable support is also provided by several Member States co-organising events under the Programme.
45. In this context, and in order to streamline the cooperation between the OPCW and the African Union, the Secretariat held a productive meeting with the AU-PAPS on 18 December 2020. During the meeting, the Secretariat proposed an action plan to streamline the bilateral cooperation between the OPCW and the African Union for the implementation of the Africa Programme, based on the memorandum of understanding signed by the two organisations in 2006.
46. The proposed plan consisted of 12 suggested actions covering three specific areas, namely collaboration and conduct of joint activities, conduct of regular consultations, and exchange of visits at the senior level, in addition to organisational arrangements such as designation of focal points and holding of periodic coordination meetings.
47. The AU-PAPS warmly welcomed the OPCW initiative and contacts have been maintained in the subsequent months to reactivate the bilateral cooperation along the lines of the proposed action plan.