



### **OPENING STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AT ITS 100TH SESSION (FULL VERSION)**

1. I warmly welcome all delegations to this historic 100th Session of the Executive Council, marking 25 years of common work for the benefit of the international community. Common work, collective effort, and a significant amount of public money invested. My tribute goes out to all of those who worked here before us, because thanks to their legacy we are endowed with an important instrument to continue working together for global peace and security.
2. I welcome in particular the new Chairperson of the Council, Ambassador Ziad Al Atiyah, the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the OPCW. Ambassador, your rich experience in diplomacy will greatly benefit the work of the Council. I have no doubt of your success as the new Chairperson.
3. I extend my appreciation to the outgoing Chairperson, Ambassador Dr Eniola Olaitan Ajayi, the Permanent Representative of Nigeria, for her skilful leadership of the Council at a critical time of transition.
4. I convey my gratitude to all of the outgoing Members of the Council and welcome all the new ones joining us today. I also seize this opportunity to bid farewell to the Ambassadors who have left the Organisation since the last Executive Council session, and to those who will be leaving in the summer. I warmly welcome the Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives who have just arrived.
5. The lifting of COVID-19 restrictions by the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands has allowed us to hold this session with less stringent measures. Nonetheless, we must remain careful and respect the guidelines approved by the Council to limit the spread of the virus. Official figures related to the increase in the number of infections, including in the Netherlands, are worrisome as they show that the virus is still prevalent. An important consideration for this Council is to reduce, to the extent possible, the duration of the session for our collective health and security.
6. I wish to begin by highlighting some key developments in the intersessional period.
7. On 20 May, we commemorated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention and the establishment of the OPCW, with a seminar that took place in this room. I wish to convey my appreciation to all Members of the Council for your attendance and active participation in that event. A recurring theme from the seminar was that the taboo against the use, or threat of use, of chemical weapons remains strong. Yet, there is no room for complacency, especially as we approach the end of the destruction phase.



8. As at 30 June 2022, the Secretariat had verified the destruction by possessor States Parties of 99.29% of all declared chemical weapons stockpiles, or 71,789 metric tonnes. The destruction of the remaining stockpiles is on course to be completed in 2023. During my bilateral visit to the United States of America last month, I discussed the matter with senior government officials, and the destruction is progressing well.
9. The upcoming end of the destruction of all declared chemical weapons stockpiles is only the culmination of an important period, but not the conclusion of our common task.
10. Preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons and their use is an enduring endeavour. As demonstrated by communications from the Russian Federation and Ukraine, shared with all States Parties, the threat of use of chemical weapons in Ukraine is a serious concern. For this reason, the Secretariat has been closely monitoring the situation since the end of February. It has done so both from a security perspective and to assess the impact of the conflict on the possible chemical industry inspections in the country. It has also remained in contact with both the Russian Federation and Ukraine on matters related to the implementation of the Convention in Ukraine. The Secretariat has also provided advice to the United Nations Designated Security Official and the United Nations Security Management Team in Ukraine on planning and preparing in case of an incident involving chemical warfare agents or toxic industrial chemicals.
11. I note that support has been provided to Ukraine, upon its request, and in line with the Convention, through contributions and pledges to the trust fund for assistance and protection against chemical weapons. To date, three States Parties have contributed EUR 744,000 to the trust fund, while three others have made pledges totalling about EUR 400,000. Over the years, the Secretariat has developed assistance and protection programmes and activities for all States Parties. Needless to say, the overall security situation in Ukraine continues to affect the ability of the Secretariat to conduct in-person activities for Ukrainian participants and to deploy for inspections of Ukrainian chemical industry facilities. The Secretariat will continue monitoring the situation and providing additional assistance.
12. I will now turn to the physical security of the Headquarters. During the Council's last session, I informed you that a full internal security risk assessment by our security team had been carried out. I also briefed you on the measures that we are adopting to reinforce the security of the OPCW building and its perimeter.
13. As you were informed at the March session of the Council, the implementation of these measures will require additional funding. The total required funding for the security upgrades is estimated at EUR 6.5 million. The Secretariat has reprioritised and reallocated existing funds in the amount of EUR 810,000 from the Special Fund for Cybersecurity, Business Continuity and Physical Infrastructure Security, to begin work on the highest priority upgrades for the reception area. Nevertheless, EUR 5.7 million is still required. The Secretariat's security team has been consulting with interested States Parties on the outstanding funds, and I am encouraged by the response so far.
14. I am pleased to inform you that the Secretariat has already undertaken some initial work. An upgrade of the physical security systems has been completed. It encompasses the installation of a new access control system, intercoms, closed-circuit television, and the issuance of new access badges. Procurement processes have begun to establish

a secure compartment in the reception area, as well as to upgrade the security critical areas from the fifth to the seventh floors. Additionally, new garage gates at the Headquarters are scheduled to be installed this summer.

15. This work is essential to ensuring the present and future security of the OPCW Headquarters building and its perimeter.
16. This year alone, over 20 demonstrations have taken place outside the building, with a peak of two demonstrations per week since early May.
17. The Secretariat is in permanent contact with the relevant Dutch authorities and continues to request adequate security support. This includes the provision of police protection on the boundaries and in the vicinity of the Headquarters, in line with the authorities' responsibilities under the Host Country's international legal framework. The Host Country has been repeatedly informed that the high number of demonstrations has stretched the Secretariat's resources for safeguarding the control and authority of the OPCW Headquarters. This has resulted in additional costs in overtime for security staff, thus far estimated at EUR 15,000 at the end of June 2022.
18. The project for the Centre for Chemistry and Technology (ChemTech Centre) has recorded a steady progress. This demonstrates that the Secretariat continues to deliver. Construction has been kept on schedule and respecting budget. Completion of the Centre is expected by the end of this year, despite the continuing impacts of the pandemic, current global inflation, and supply chain challenges. We plan to begin activities at the Centre in spring 2023 after an inauguration ceremony. All 193 OPCW Member States will be invited. As usual for such important events, States Parties are invited to consider the most appropriate level of participation of representatives, be it at the level of ambassador, minister, or higher.
19. A Note providing an update on the progress of the ChemTech Centre was shared with all States Parties last month (S/2072/2022, dated 24 June 2022), and a briefing on its status will take place tomorrow. Another Note on future projects at the ChemTech Centre was shared with the States Parties in March (S/2034/2022, dated 1 March 2022). I thank the States Parties that have already provided written feedback in respect of this Note, which will be reflected in the next version of the Secretariat's proposal. Receiving written comments from States Parties is essential for the Secretariat. I invite delegations to continue sharing their views on the proposals put forward so far. In line with the Secretariat's timely and sequenced approach to the preparation of these projects, a further and more detailed Note on anticipated programmes and activities at the Centre will be issued to States Parties after the summer.
20. I reiterate my sincere appreciation to all contributors for their financial support. Thanks to them, the international community will have an essential tool that will benefit peace and security. To date, financial contributions and pledges totalling EUR 33.9 million have been received from 53 countries, the European Union, and other donors. The trust fund for the Centre remains open for further contributions. Additional donations will provide extra assurances for the successful completion of the Centre, and for projects to be carried out there as soon as it becomes operational in 2023.

21. As we look to the future, the Fifth Review Conference is the moment to assess the implementation of the Convention over the past few years, and to set the strategic direction of the Organisation for the next five years and beyond. I am pleased to note that the Open-Ended Working Group for the Preparation of the Fifth Review Conference has begun its important work. The Group held two meetings in June, under the able stewardship of Ambassador Lauri Kuusing of Estonia. The Secretariat will continue to support this process by providing presentations, and by issuing the comprehensive Note on the implementation of the Convention since the last Review Conference in 2018.
22. On 30 June, an informal briefing was provided to States Parties related to the Syrian Arab Republic's chemical weapons dossier.
23. The Secretariat, through the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), has continued its efforts to clarify the shortcomings noted in the Syrian Arab Republic's initial declaration.
24. As I informed the Council previously, since April 2021, over a year ago, the Secretariat has not been able to deploy the DAT to carry out the twenty-fifth round of consultations between the DAT and the Syrian National Authority. The Syrian Arab Republic has repeatedly refused to issue an entry visa to the lead technical expert from the DAT, a top expert who has deployed to the Syrian Arab Republic more than 20 times. Seeking to make progress in the work of the DAT, the Secretariat alternatively proposed a meeting between the DAT and the Syrian National Authority in Beirut, Lebanon. Yet, the Syrian Arab Republic conditioned its participation in this limited round of consultations in Beirut on the exclusion from this meeting of the same DAT expert.
25. A similar situation of paralysis already occurred between June 2016 and April 2019. I quote what my predecessor reported to the Council in July 2016: "A continuation of this effort without a change in approach by the Syrian Arab Republic to resolve all outstanding issues related to its declaration is unlikely to yield concrete results". Aware of this precedent, the Secretariat has proposed, pending a change of attitude from the Syrian Arab Republic, that shortcomings in its initial declaration be addressed through the exchange of correspondence. I wish to highlight that such an exchange generates fewer outcomes when compared to deployments by the DAT. I restate that the Syrian Arab Republic has an obligation to allow full and unfettered access to personnel designated by the OPCW under the Convention, United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), and the corresponding decisions of the OPCW policy-making organs.
26. Pursuant to paragraph 11 of the Council decision adopted in November 2016, the Secretariat plans to conduct two rounds of inspections at the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the Syrian Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC) this year.
27. Regarding the Schedule 2.B.04 chemical detected during the third round of inspections in November 2018 at the Barzah facility of the SSRC, the Secretariat has engaged with the Syrian Arab Republic on this matter mostly through the exchange of letters. As previously reported, the Syrian Arab Republic has yet to provide sufficient technical information that would enable the Secretariat to close this issue.
28. The OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria (FFM) is currently working on allegations that have been assessed as credible. The FFM is continuing to analyse information collected from deployments conducted by its team and is preparing for upcoming deployments. It will report on the allegations under investigation in due course.

29. The Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) has looked into the two reports by the FFM, issued by the Secretariat on 24 and 31 January 2022, regarding two incidents—one in Marea in September 2015 and the other in Kafr Zeita in October 2016. It did so to determine whether those reports provide sufficient material to launch investigations into identifying the perpetrators involved in these incidents. The Syrian Arab Republic continues to refuse to engage with the IIT in any way. At the same time, the IIT continues to make progress on its current investigations, and its next report will be issued in due course.
30. I again recall the decision adopted by the Conference of the States Parties at its April 2021 session entitled “Addressing the Possession and Use of Chemical Weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic” (C-25/DEC.9, dated 21 April 2021), which suspended certain rights and privileges of that State Party. The Conference decided that these rights will be reinstated once I have reported that the Syrian Arab Republic has completed the requested measures adopted in the July 2020 Executive Council decision. To date, the Syrian Arab Republic has not completed any of these measures.
31. As I have repeatedly stated while briefing the Council, over a year ago I invited the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic to an in-person meeting in The Hague or any other mutually agreed place, such as Geneva. The goal of such a meeting is to ensure that the Syrian Arab Republic complies with all its obligations under the Convention, the relevant decisions of the OPCW policy-making organs, and United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) in the shortest possible time. No communication regarding my last message on this matter (dated 20 December 2021) has been received from the Syrian side. When the Syrian Arab Republic is ready to back its declarations of commitment with actions, including by engaging constructively on the venue and agenda, the Secretariat will be ready to engage accordingly. In any event, as Director-General, I cannot justify travelling to a State Party that has been deprived of certain rights by the Conference of the States Parties.
32. For its part, the Secretariat continues to implement its mandates under the Convention, the decisions of the policy-making organs, and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council.
33. I now turn to updates on the Secretariat’s other activities.
34. With the lifting of COVID-19 measures and the subsequent relaxation of travel restrictions, the International Cooperation and Assistance Division has resumed in-person capacity-building activities, in tandem with the delivery of online capacity-building support. Since the last session of the Council, 38 capacity-building events, including 20 online and 18 in-person, have been conducted, benefitting 1,176 participants from all geographical regions.
35. On destruction-related activities, the Secretariat has maintained its verification activities at chemical weapons destruction facilities in the United States of America. As at 30 June 2022, the Secretariat had verified the destruction by the United States of 27,255 MT, or 98.14%, of its Category 1 chemical weapons stockpile. The United States plans to complete the destruction of the remaining 1.86% of its stockpile by the agreed deadline of 2023.

36. As was decided by the Conference last year, 180 chemical industry inspections are planned for 2022. Since the March session of the Council, the Secretariat has conducted 62 inspections. Yet, considering among other things the ongoing impact of COVID-19-related measures that China has had to adopt responsibly to further limit the spread of the virus, which we all fully understand, it is now obvious that the Secretariat will not be able to conduct all 180 planned inspections. The Secretariat will continue to monitor the situation, to adapt its planned activities, and to report to the Council accordingly.
37. China and Japan have continued bilateral consultations on the excavation, recovery, and destruction of abandoned chemical weapons (ACW) at various sites in China. As at 31 May 2022, a total of 60,033 of the 89,836 declared items of ACW on the territory of China have been reported by Japan as destroyed. Because of the current situation regarding COVID-19, no ACW inspections have been carried out in China since the last session of the Council. The Secretariat, China, and Japan are in the process of scheduling the next virtual trilateral meeting. The focus of this meeting will include the possibility of conducting verification activities, despite the COVID-19 situation.
38. Regarding old chemical weapons (OCW), since the last session of the Council the Secretariat has conducted two OCW inspections, in the Netherlands and in Estonia. The Netherlands informed the Secretariat of its intention to transfer two items of OCW to Belgium for disposal at a dedicated destruction facility. These items were manufactured prior to 1925. A national paper on this matter has been circulated to the Council (EC-100/NAT.1, dated 10 June 2022). The Secretariat conducted a technical assistance visit to Estonia from 13 to 16 June to assist with the assessment of a suspected OCW item.
39. As was repeatedly highlighted during the twenty-fifth anniversary seminar, the end of the destruction phase requires the Organisation to strengthen its focus on preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons, including countering chemical terrorism.
40. The Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism, chaired by Ambassador Madonsela of South Africa, leads this crucial work and met on 27 June. A representative of the office of the European Union Counter-Terrorism Coordinator and the Head of the Secretariat of the Network of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Chemical, Biological, and Radiological Defence Experts gave presentations on regional coordination in countering chemical terrorism. In addition, the Group discussed issues that may be useful to the preparatory process for the Fifth Review Conference. I thank the Chairperson for facilitating this discussion, which is helpful for the Review Conference preparations, but also provides useful inputs to the work of the Secretariat.
41. I am pleased to note the resumption of in-person meetings of the OPCW's subsidiary and other bodies following the new measures. Their work is vital to strengthening Convention implementation.
42. The Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) and the Advisory Body on Administrative and Financial Matters (ABAF) met last month. The Advisory Board on Education and Outreach (ABEO) will meet this month, as will the ABAF again.
43. I was informed that at the last meeting of the facilitation on internal governance issues, it was suggested that a number of topics, including the tenure policy and other governance-related matters, be discussed as part of the preparatory process for the Fifth

Review Conference. I consider this to be the most efficient way forward, as it avoids duplication of efforts and still allows States Parties to continue to work on those matters. I wish to sincerely thank the two co-facilitators, Ambassador Matthew Neuhaus of Australia and Ambassador Elisabeth Ward of Panama. Thanks to their efforts, the Open-Ended Working Group for the Preparation of the Fifth Review Conference has a good basis on which to work.

44. With respect to geographical diversity within the Secretariat, we continue to utilise additional opportunities to present the OPCW as an attractive employer. We have done so in particular in regions from which the number of qualified applicants for vacancies remains comparatively low. Additional measures that we have adopted include involving the ABEO, highlighting this issue in the OPCW Associate Programme, and raising awareness in our presentations to the regional meetings of National Authorities and at other events. I strongly encourage States Parties to embark upon similar efforts and to raise the profile of the OPCW as a unique career opportunity.
45. All of the activities I have mentioned require the support of a robust OPCW administration. As States Parties wish the Secretariat to continue its efforts on these important matters, I invite them to consider ways to strengthen the Administration Division to continue to deliver as requested.
46. Like with other institutions, the OPCW's operations have been affected by global inflationary pressures, including sharp increases in utility and travel costs.
47. The Secretariat is managing the cost pressures of this dynamic year, largely through expected savings imposed by COVID-19 travel restrictions earlier this year, as well as through the use of extrabudgetary resources.
48. The prospect of continuing, and historically significant, inflationary pressure is also being taken into consideration as the Secretariat prepares the draft budget update for the mid-biennium 2023.
49. The proposal for this update will be circulated soon after the current session of the Council. It will incorporate only limited essential changes to the 2023 budget, based on unpredictable developments when the biennium budget was formulated. The cost areas most particularly impacted are utilities, rent, and Inspectorate travel. We must bear in mind that chemical industry inspections as currently carried out are on-site activities that are not amenable to the remote or hybrid options open to other programmes. For instance, initially estimated costs for flights for mandated inspections to some States Parties have multiplied by several times. These costs cover travel fares only, and do not include quarantine-related costs for longer hotel stays. I urge States Parties with inspectable activities to show flexibility regarding alternative flight routes for inspections to allow for some cost efficiencies.
50. Looking forward, I am pleased to inform the Council that we have revamped the OPCW-The Hague Award, in close cooperation with the Municipality of the Hague, its co-sponsor. The award now comprises a category for young professionals. This will ensure its future viability, while at the same time serving as an outreach tool to the younger generation. The revised award was launched this month with a call for nominations. I urge States Parties to put forward suitable candidates for this prestigious prize.

51. The OPCW is a Nobel Prize-winning organisation. We must continue to live up to this high standard.
52. In this context, I express my deepest appreciation to the staff of the OPCW for their loyalty and dedication. For a quarter of a century, they have delivered, irrespective of the conditions. In particular, I wish to thank Ms Kayoko Gotoh, who was our Director of International Cooperation and Assistance until she left the Secretariat last May. I also wish to thank Ms Veronika Stromšíková, Director of the Office of Strategy and Policy, who will be leaving us this summer after six years of outstanding performance in the Secretariat. It is therefore the last Executive Council session for Director Stromšíková. The support and dedication of these Directors have been essential for the Secretariat to deliver upon the mandates that the States Parties have given to us. You will be missed, both at the Secretariat and within the community of delegates with whom you have developed trusted relations.
53. In closing, I wish you a short, positive, and productive session.

### **Chemical demilitarisation and verification**

#### Status of destruction of declared stockpiles

##### *United States of America*

54. The United States of America has two remaining chemical weapons destruction facility sites: the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (PCAPP) in Colorado, and the Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (BGCAPP) in Kentucky.
55. The PCAPP main plant continues to destroy distilled mustard-filled projectiles. In February 2022, three static detonation chambers (SDCs), as a non-contiguous part of the PCAPP, started the destruction of chemical weapons, under verification by the Secretariat.
56. The BGCAPP main plant completed the destruction of VX-filled rockets and rocket warheads on 19 April 2022. The main plant started the destruction of sarin-filled rockets and rocket warheads in July 2022. The preparation of two additional SDCs—SDC 1200 and SDC 2000—to begin operations is ongoing. These two non-contiguous sites will augment the disposal of secondary waste from warheads that have been drained of chemical agent. SDC 2000 will also be used to destroy overpacked rockets.
57. As for the remaining stockpile, as at 30 June, the Secretariat had verified the destruction by the United States of America of 27,255 MT, or 98.14%, of its Category 1 chemical weapons stockpile. The United States plans to complete the destruction of the remaining 1.86% of its stockpile by the agreed deadline in 2023.
58. Pursuant to Conference decision C-11/DEC.20, dated 8 December 2006, the invitation of the United States of America for representatives of the Council to visit the BGCAPP remains open. Owing to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the visit has been further postponed to a date yet to be determined.
59. On 21 and 22 March, the United States of America held a chemical demilitarisation transparency event in virtual format. The Chairperson and representatives of the regional groups of the Council, as well as members of the Secretariat, were invited to the event, which focused on destruction progress at the BGCAPP.



### Declarations

60. Since the last session of the Council, there have been no changes regarding the submission of initial declarations, with only one State Party, Tonga, yet to submit declarations under Articles III and VI of the Convention.
61. A status report on the timely submission of annual declarations was provided to States Parties for the period 1 January to 31 May 2022 (EC-100/DG.11, dated 16 June 2022) in advance of this session of the Council.
62. A presentation will be provided during this session of the Council on amendments and other documents received by the Secretariat during the intersessional period regarding Article III declarations.

### Article VI inspections

63. The Secretariat's "Optimisation of Article VI verification" project continues to deliver tools and methods to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Article VI verification. New report templates for Schedule 2, Schedule 3, and other chemical production facility (OCPF) inspections have been developed and are expected to be tested in the field in the coming months. Guidelines for the preparation of pre-inspection briefings during Article VI inspections have been prepared and are currently available on the OPCW external website (<https://www.opcw.org/industry-inspections/pre-inspection-briefing-pib>). Digitalisation efforts are currently under way to improve internal inspection-related procedures within the Inspectorate Division. Training for inspected States Parties on all deliverables is expected to be conducted in the second half of the year.

### Enterprise content management

64. The enterprise content management (ECM) system will provide updated capabilities for the capture, processing, and storage of verification-related documents and all other classified documents in the custody of the OPCW secure archive. Currently, the functionality of ECM for these activities is being tested and is close to completion. The main areas of focus in the upcoming period will be training of users, the development of related procedures, work instructions, and other user support documentation, as well as the migration of legacy data.

### Inspector training

65. From 7 to 11 March 2022, the Secretariat organised and conducted toxic chemical training at Vyskov, the Czech Republic, for 14 inspectors. From 20 to 24 June, an additional toxic chemical training session was conducted for 10 inspectors in Slovakia at the Training and Testing Centre of Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Protection in Zemianske Kostol'any.
66. From 21 to 25 March, the Secretariat organised a basic interview skills training course at OPCW Headquarters for 12 inspectors. The training was conducted based on a scenario of investigation of alleged use and included practical exercises, role-playing, and knowledge-sharing sessions.

67. In April, the Institute for International Criminal Investigations (IICI) in the Netherlands conducted an interview course tailored to the OPCW for 14 inspectors and other members of the Secretariat whose work is related to non-routine missions. From 4 to 8 April, the IICI also delivered an advanced open-source investigation course for similar Secretariat staff members and a further three inspectors.
68. In April, three advanced health and safety specialist inspectors completed tactical emergency casualty care courses in the Czech Republic. In June, four advanced health and safety specialist inspectors also completed an advanced hazmat life saver course in Switzerland. Also in June, one advanced health and safety specialist inspector undertook obligatory broad medical training, which was provided by the Offshore Medic Course in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
69. From 4 to 8 April, the Secretariat conducted a reconnaissance and sampling exercise with the Munition Technology Museum in the Netherlands. Seven inspectors participated in the exercise, which consisted of theoretical and practical scenarios involving explosive ordnance awareness and recognition, as well as explosive ordnance and environmental sampling.
70. From 9 to 13 May, the Secretariat delivered a Schedule 1 chemistry course for five inspectors to refresh their knowledge in the properties, toxicology, synthesis, decontamination, and degradation pathways of Schedule 1 chemicals to determine their presence or absence during the conduct of all OPCW inspections.
71. On 24 and 25 May, 44 inspectors completed the Occupational Safety and Health Administration Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response standard course, which is mandatory under the regulations of the United States of America for individuals working in chemical weapons destruction facilities.
72. From 15 to 20 May, 15 inspectors took part in a Safe and Secure Approaches in Field Environments course in Germany. This training is a requirement of the United Nations Department of Safety and Security for operations in high-risk environments.
73. From 20 to 24 June, non-destructive evaluation (NDE) practical training was conducted in Belgium for nine inspectors to either receive or renew their certification as level 1 NDE operators with the OPCW.
74. I would like to seize this opportunity to express my appreciation to Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany, Slovakia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America for their continuous support for organising inspector-related training.

#### OPCW Laboratory

75. The OPCW Laboratory continues to host two proficiency tests (environmental and biomedical) each year to validate the capabilities of laboratories. The Fiftieth Official OPCW Proficiency Test was finalised in April 2022. The Fifty-First Official OPCW Proficiency Test and the Seventh Official OPCW Biomedical Proficiency Test are ongoing, with the evaluation of results expected to be completed in August 2022.

76. The network of designated laboratories consists of 29 laboratories from 21 States Parties. Twenty-four laboratories from 21 States Parties are designated for environmental sample analysis, and 20 laboratories from 14 States Parties are designated for biomedical sample analysis. Currently, 16 of the 29 laboratories have concluded technical arrangements with the Secretariat for the analysis of authentic samples. These arrangements are necessary to allow for the analysis of such samples off-site. The OPCW is therefore able to draw on the expertise of more than half of the designated laboratories for environmental samples and/or biomedical samples. I encourage all other States Parties to assist their laboratories in concluding such technical arrangements.
77. The Sixth OPCW Exercise on the Analysis of Biologically Derived Toxins, in which 26 laboratories from 20 States Parties took part, is currently being evaluated and the final results are expected in August 2022.
78. The Thirteenth Chemical Weapons Convention Chemical Analysis Competency Test (CCACT-13) was finalised in April 2022, with the participation of 11 laboratories from 11 States Parties. CCACT-14 is currently ongoing with the final evaluation results expected in August 2022.
79. The OPCW Laboratory continues to provide training to both Secretariat staff and external participants. In May 2022, a “Women in Chemistry” training course was held at the OPCW Laboratory for 10 participants from 10 States Parties.
80. The latest release of the OPCW Central Analytical Database (version 24) is available electronically from the documentation counter at OPCW Headquarters.

#### **International cooperation and assistance**

81. Building on the experience gained during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Secretariat is continuously improving the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of its online learning opportunities and actively combining them with resumed in-person training events as an enhanced, hybrid capacity-building package for States Parties.
82. I would like to acknowledge with great appreciation all in-kind and financial support provided by donors and partners to support the OPCW’s international cooperation and assistance activities and projects.

#### **Implementation support**

83. Under the Mentorship/Partnership Programme for National Authorities, two visits took place during the intersessional period. Representatives of the National Authority of Malaysia visited Australia from 28 March to 1 April 2022 and representatives of the National Authority of France visited Côte d’Ivoire from 28 March to 1 April. The visits provided valuable opportunities for each National Authority to share experiences and best practices concerning the implementation of the Convention. Participants were also able to visit relevant facilities, discuss and plan follow-up actions, build working relationships, and strengthen regional cooperation.

84. From 25 April to 11 May, the Secretariat delivered a training course on fulfilling declarations and inspections obligations under Article VI of the Convention, which provided participants with the opportunity to enhance their knowledge and share experiences and best practices related to Article VI implementation. Nineteen participants from 12 States Parties completed the course.
85. From 16 to 18 May, the Secretariat, in cooperation with the World Customs Organization (WCO), held an online training course for representatives of customs training institutions. Participants gained insights into the transfer provisions under the Convention, discussed transfer scenarios with OPCW and WCO experts, and shared good practices and experiences in implementing national training programmes in the enforcement of trade controls. The course was completed by 58 participants from 34 States Parties.
86. In May and June 2022, the Secretariat held four regional meetings of National Authorities: for States Parties from Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, and the Latin America and Caribbean Group (GRULAC). The meetings provided National Authority delegates with a forum to discuss the regional status of Convention implementation and to share good practices, consider challenges, and examine their capacity-building needs. Fifty-four delegates from 26 States Parties attended the Asian regional meeting; 27 delegates from 16 States Parties attended the African regional meeting; 20 delegates from 12 States Parties attended the Eastern European regional meeting; and 49 delegates from 20 States Parties attended the GRULAC regional meeting.
87. On 30 May, the Secretariat held the Fifth National Legislative Review Forum with a delegation from Malawi. National legislative review forums focus on assisting States Parties in fulfilling their Article VII obligations related to legislative drafting and review. Eight delegates from Malawi, representing its National Authority, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defence, and Permanent Representation to the OPCW attended the forum.

#### Assistance and protection

88. From 28 to 30 March, the Secretariat organised in Cape Town, South Africa an in-person meeting for States Parties of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to review and discuss information gathered through the Online Self-Assessment Tool (OSAT). The OSAT project, which is funded by the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the European Union, aims to help States Parties, initially from the SADC region, to assess the risks posed by hazardous chemicals, to audit existing response capacities, and to identify necessary improvement measures. The meeting was attended by 82 participants—52 in-person and 30 online—representing national institutions responsible for chemical emergencies from 13 States Parties.
89. From 14 March to 1 April, the Secretariat conducted, in partnership with the Defence Science and Technology Organisation of Pakistan, an online course on reconnaissance and sampling operations in highly contaminated environments. During the course, 160 emergency professionals from 49 States Parties from all geographical regions enhanced their knowledge of detection, identification, monitoring, and sampling of chemical warfare agents and toxic industrial chemicals.

90. From 21 March to 1 April, the Secretariat organised, in coordination with the National Authority of Panama, the first basic course on assistance and protection against chemical warfare agents and toxic industrial chemicals for nursing personnel, which was held virtually. On-the-ground experiences were shared by instructors from Spain's chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) Defence Military School and the Gómez Ulla Military Hospital, in cooperation with experts from Panama's Ministry of Health, the University of Panama, and the Meritorious Fire Department. The course was attended by 16 nurses from Panama.
91. From 18 to 22 April, the Secretariat and the National Authority of Panama jointly organised a regional basic assistance and protection training course in Panama City, Panama, attended by 32 first responders from 15 GRULAC States Parties. The training was supported by the Panamanian Firefighter Corps with instructional support from experts from Argentina, Cuba, and Uruguay, which was secured through the OPCW Instructor Development and Exchange Programme. The practical training sessions took place on the Panama Canal in collaboration with the Panama Canal Authority.
92. From 9 to 13 May, the Secretariat and the Government Namibia co-organised a training course for first responders from the SADC region in Swakopmund, Namibia, with financial support from the European Union. The course was delivered by OPCW experts and a team of instructors from Kenya, Mauritius, and Uganda, whose participation was secured through the OPCW Instructor Development and Exchange Programme. It covered the use of individual and collective protective equipment, as well as monitoring, detection, and decontamination equipment and techniques. The course was attended by 44 representatives from 14 States Parties.
93. From 24 to 26 May, the Secretariat organised, jointly with the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, a regional table-top exercise on chemical emergency response for members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), with financial support from the European Union. The exercise, held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, was attended by 40 representatives from 12 ECOWAS States Parties.
94. From 23 to 27 May, the Secretariat and the National Authority of Brazil jointly organised in Rio de Janeiro a regional training course related to medical assistance during incidents involving chemical warfare agents and toxic industrial chemicals. The course, conducted at the Brazilian Air Force Hospital do Galeão, was attended by 18 participants from 11 GRULAC States Parties, included military and civilian doctors and other medical personnel involved in national emergency response systems.
95. From 1 to 9 June, the Secretariat jointly organised with the Population Protection Institute of the Czech Republic the Sixth International Course on Assistance and Protection for Instructors. The course, held in Lázně Bohdaneč, the Czech Republic, enhanced the skills of chemical emergency response instructors to train first responders on how to handle incidents involving chemical warfare agents and toxic industrial chemicals. The course was attended by 15 professionals from 12 States Parties.
96. From 6 to 10 June, the Secretariat organised, jointly with the Ministry of National Defence of Ecuador and with the support of the Firefighter Corps of the City of Quito, a regional table-top exercise in chemical emergency response for the GRULAC region. The exercise, held in Quito, Ecuador, was delivered by instructors from Argentina, Ecuador, Peru, and

Spain under the OPCW's Instructor Development and Exchange Programme. The exercise was attended by 38 participants from 15 GRULAC States Parties.

97. From 11 to 30 April and 6 to 10 June, the Secretariat organised, in partnership with the Italian National Authority's Technical Operational Unit, the second and third parts of a three-part workshop for law enforcement first response professionals from West Africa and Southeast Europe. The workshop, held in Montelibretti, Italy, developed the participants' knowledge and skills to manage the scene of a chemical incident or attack. It was attended by 16 professionals from nine States Parties.
98. From 31 May to 10 June, the Secretariat and the Government of Slovakia organised an international training course for first responders in Zemianske Kostol'any, Slovakia. During the course, participants worked with live chemical agents in a controlled training environment, deepening their knowledge of safe practices, medical countermeasures, protective equipment, and the physical and chemical properties of chemical warfare agents. The training was attended by 17 participants from 13 States Parties.
99. The Secretariat held two regional basic training courses for first responders from Asian States Parties, the first in Seoul, the Republic of Korea from 13 to 17 June, and the second immediately after in Dhaka, Bangladesh from 19 to 23 June. The courses, which because of the COVID-19 pandemic were the first in-person training cycles in the Asia region in two years, were organised in collaboration with the Republic of Korea's CBRN Defence Command and Bangladesh's National Authority. Eighteen participants from 13 States Parties took part in the Seoul course, while 37 participants from six States Parties participated in the Dhaka course.
100. From 14 to 18 June, the Secretariat and the Government of Nigeria jointly organised in Abuja, Nigeria, a subregional training course on chemical emergency response for ECOWAS States Parties. Thirty-eight first responders from 11 States Parties participated in the course, which was funded through a combination of resources from the regular budget and support from the European Union.

#### International cooperation

101. In the area of Article XI implementation, the Secretariat continued to support States Parties across the three thematic areas as mandated by the States Parties in 2011 (C-16/DEC.10, 1 December 2011).

#### *Integrated chemicals management*

102. From 4 to 6 April, the Secretariat organised in Wuppertal, Germany, a workshop on developing indicative guidelines for the transportation of hazardous chemicals by road. This launched the second phase of the "Chemical Safety and Security Tools Development Programme", which follows the release in 2021 of the "Indicative Guidelines for Chemical Safety and Security in Small and Medium-sized Enterprises to Foster the Peaceful Uses of Chemistry". The workshop hosted 11 chemical safety and security experts from seven States Parties.

103. From 10 to 12 May, the Secretariat organised in Harare, Zimbabwe, a seminar on chemical safety and security management for African States Parties. The seminar aimed at raising awareness of the importance of chemical safety and security policies and guidelines to prevent chemical accidents and the potential misuse of toxic chemicals. It was attended by 35 participants from 13 States Parties.
104. From 27 to 28 June, the Secretariat held an advanced course for participants from Nigeria on supply chain vulnerability assessments. The course, which was funded by the United States of America, aimed to provide tools to assess, mitigate, and respond to risks from chemical accidents, and to prevent the misuse of dual-use chemicals. The course was attended by 22 Nigerian participants representing the National Authority, industry, academia, and government laboratories.

*Enhancing laboratories' capabilities*

105. Three activities were carried out within the framework of the “Project on Assessing and Enhancing Capacity of Analytical Laboratories from African and GRULAC Member States”, which is funded by a voluntary contribution from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. First, within the 2021–2022 phase of the project, the Secretariat organised from 21 January to 23 March an online comprehensive training programme to enhance the analytical capacities of laboratories from African States Parties. This was attended by 34 participants from laboratories in Kenya and Nigeria. Second, from 7 to 18 March the Secretariat and the Laboratorio de Verificación de Armas Químicas (LAVEMA) of Spain jointly hosted an online training course on the OPCW proficiency tests for GRULAC States Parties, which focused on the strategies and procedures required to pass OPCW proficiency tests. This was attended by 14 participants from Brazil and Chile. Finally, to conclude the 2021–2022 phase of the project, the Secretariat organised on 7 April an online workshop summarising the progress achieved in the project and discussing the activities planned for the 2022–2023 period. The workshop was attended by 28 participants from eight States Parties.
106. From 25 to 29 April, the Secretariat organised, with the Indian Institute of Chemical Technology, an online analytical skills development course for analytical chemists and chemical professionals from States Parties with economies that are developing or in transition. The course, which was attended by 19 participants from 18 States Parties, equipped participants with information and know-how on the analysis of Convention-related chemicals using gas chromatography/mass spectrometry.
107. From 17 to 19 May, the Secretariat organised at the OPCW Laboratory a basic analytical chemistry course for women. The course aimed to assist qualified female analytical chemists from States Parties whose economies are developing or in transition to acquire further knowledge and experience in the analysis of Convention-related chemicals. The training was attended by 10 female chemists from 10 States Parties.
108. From 23 May to 3 June, an analytical chemistry course was held at Protechnik Laboratories in Pretoria, South Africa, under the Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa on the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Africa Programme”). The course provided 22 participants from 16 African States Parties with technical knowledge and practical skills for the analysis of Convention-related substances.

109. From 30 May to 10 June, the Secretariat organised, with the Finnish Institute for Verification of the Chemical Weapons Convention (VERIFIN), a two-week online analytical skills development course for chemistry professionals from African States Parties, with financial support from the European Union. The course, which was attended by 14 participants from 11 African States Parties, focused on building the capacities of qualified analytical chemists in the quantitative analysis of chemicals related to the Convention and other skills.

#### Promoting chemical knowledge

110. On 7 April, the Secretariat organised an online training course to raise awareness about the Convention among the next generation of professionals in the fields of science and chemistry. The course, supported by a voluntary contribution from the European Union, was attended by 47 participants from 18 States Parties.
111. On 28 April, the Secretariat organised an online forum on the peaceful uses of chemistry targeting chemists, chemical engineers, and other relevant professionals from government, industry, and academia. The forum was attended by 39 participants from 16 States Parties.
112. Under the Fellowship Programme, 10 fellowships were completed during the intersessional period by individuals from Argentina (one hosted in the Netherlands), Cameroon (one hosted in Germany), Cuba (two hosted in Italy and Mexico), Nigeria (two hosted in South Africa and the United States of America), Serbia (one hosted in Finland), and Uganda (three hosted in Finland, Germany, and South Africa).
113. Under the Programme for Support of Research Projects, the Secretariat continued to extend its support to small-scale research projects in States Parties 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. During the reporting period, six new research projects were approved, of which five projects had commenced, namely: three in Malaysia, one in Serbia, and one in Poland. The total number of research projects stands at 28.

#### Africa Programme

114. The implementation of the Africa Programme continued to progress during the intersessional period, addressing the eight Programme objectives through targeted activities embedded in the activities described above. In all, 21 of the capacity-building events organised by the Secretariat since the Council's last session benefitted some 450 participants from 35 African States Parties, including 11 events organised specifically for Africa. In addition, the sponsorship of four fellowships as well as 12 research projects from Africa was ongoing during the reporting period.
115. The Africa Programme continues to be funded essentially through the OPCW regular budget. To further expand the Programme's impact, the Secretariat has also continued to mobilise extrabudgetary resources for additional projects, attracting financial and in-kind support from a wide range of donors and partners. I should like to thank all of them for their solid support.



116. As part of the Programme's implementation, collaborative relations continued to be developed with a wide range of international and regional organisations and institutions. In this connection, the Secretariat maintained contacts with the African Union regarding the action plan to revitalise the bilateral cooperation between the two organisations for the implementation of the Africa Programme.
117. In parallel with the continued implementation of the fifth phase of the Programme, the Secretariat earlier this year initiated preparations for the sixth phase, which will cover the period 2023 to 2025.
118. In this context, a needs assessment survey was circulated among African States Parties during the second quarter of the year to refresh the list of Africa's requirements in relation to the Convention and to update the Programme objectives for the next cycle. The outcome of the survey was reviewed with the Group of African States Parties.
119. Consultations will continue on the planning of the sixth phase of the Africa Programme with a view to finalising it at the global meeting of National Authorities in November. In accordance with established practice, a note by the Director-General on the sixth phase of the Africa Programme will be submitted to the Council at its 102nd Session in March 2023.
120. Furthermore, the Africa Programme Steering Committee has continued to monitor and support implementation of the Programme. The Committee, chaired by H.E. Ambassador Liguemoh Ondoua Madeleine of Cameroon, met on 24 June and reviewed in detail the recent developments in the Programme as well as the progress achieved in the preparations for the next phase.

### **Interagency cooperation**

121. Upon the invitation of the Chairperson of the United Nations Security Council 1540 Committee, the Secretariat took part in the Open Consultations on the Comprehensive Review of the Status of Implementation of Resolution 1540 (2004), which were held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 31 May to 2 June 2022. The resolution strengthens the non-proliferation regime by requiring that States take steps to ensure that non-State actors do not attempt to develop, or acquire in any way, weapons of mass destruction. The Secretariat highlighted relevant obligations under the Convention, which correspond with the provisions of resolution 1540. The Secretariat also seized this opportunity to present information on OPCW international cooperation and assistance activities to support States Parties in building their capacity to counter the threat of chemical terrorism.

### **Scientific Advisory Board**

122. The report of the Thirty-Fourth Session of the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB-34/1, dated 17 March 2022) and my response to it (EC-100/DG.9, dated 14 June 2022) have been issued.
123. In addition, the SAB recently convened, from 13 to 16 June, its Thirty-Fifth Session at OPCW Headquarters—its first in-person session in three years. Taking advantage of the Board members' presence in The Hague, the SAB also held two workshops following the session. The first (held at OPCW Headquarters on 16 and 17 June)

focused on artificial intelligence-assisted chemistry, while the second (held at the BASF facility in Antwerp, Belgium on 20 and 21 June) was a SAB-industry collaborative workshop on emerging scientific trends and directions in the chemical industry.

124. The SAB's Temporary Working Group on the Analysis of Biotoxins held its fifth meeting, in person, at OPCW Headquarters in The Hague from 21 to 23 June 2022.

#### **Administrative and financial matters**

125. The OPCW continues to further modernise its information systems to deliver value to States Parties. The Secretariat recently completed a major upgrade of the Eventus platform. Eventus is used to manage the OPCW's international cooperation and assistance events around the world. The new system went live in April and is a major step forward for our ongoing transformation towards modern, resilient, and secure IT systems. This updated platform features a streamlined event registration and endorsement process and improves OPCW outreach and event management capabilities. This project is based directly upon the feedback and ideas put forward by National Authorities.
126. It has been a year since our new external server "Catalyst" was launched, providing online access to the multilingual PMO Portal containing all official-series documents, informal papers, and other documents related to the work of the policy-making organs. Since then, we have continued to refine the data and improve the content.
127. I wish to remind States Parties that user accounts in Catalyst are valid for one year, expiring on 30 September, and renewable upon receipt of a note verbale from the Permanent Representation with an updated registration form. As of 1 October 2022, access will be granted only to those who have submitted an updated or new request. In the coming days, registered users will receive an email reminding them of this requirement and guidelines on how to renew their access. I encourage you all to respond in good time to avoid disruption of your work and in preparation for the next Council session.
128. I should also like to take this opportunity to urge the remaining 62 States Parties who have not yet registered for the Catalyst service to do so at their earliest convenience.

#### **Privileges and immunities**

129. I continue to emphasise the operational importance of OPCW privileges and immunities agreements. Since the last regular session of the Council, the Secretariat has engaged in further discussions with three States Parties with a view to concluding such agreements with them. I also invite States Parties that have not yet concluded or ratified a privileges and immunities agreement with the Organisation to do so at their earliest opportunity, noting that the Convention provides that privileges and immunities "shall be defined in agreements between the Organization and the States Parties".
130. The Secretariat continues to provide assistance, as requested by the relevant Dutch authorities, in connection with their investigation and prosecution in relation to the security incident at the OPCW premises, detailed in the Note by the Secretariat entitled "Security Incident of 3 December 2021" (S/2009/2021<sup>\*</sup>, dated 6 December 2021). The Secretariat provided both footage of the incident, as captured by the security cameras, and statements, waiving privileges and immunities as appropriate and without prejudice to the interests of the OPCW.

### **External relations**

131. Since the Ninety-Ninth Session of the Executive Council, I have met with a number of dignitaries at OPCW Headquarters, including Mr Thijs van der Plas, Director-General for Political Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (23 March), Mr Marc Shaw, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance of the United States of America (31 March), Mr Geoffrey Shaw, Director-General of the Australian Safeguards and Non-Proliferation Office (5 April), H.E. Dr Rogelio Mayta Mayta, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Plurinational State of Bolivia (12 April), Senator Stefania Pucciarelli, Undersecretary of State for Defence of Italy (22 April), Mr Atsushi Kaifu, Director-General of the Disarmament, Non-Proliferation and Science Department of the Foreign Policy Bureau of Japan (3 May), H.E. Mr Mbella Mbella, Minister of External Relations of the Republic of Cameroon (12 May), H.E. Ms Maria Ubach Font, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Principality of Andorra (31 May), Mr Ruslan Stefanchuk, Chairperson of the Parliament of Ukraine (10 June), and H.E. Mr Paul van den IJssel, Ambassador for International Organisations of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.
132. The Deputy Director-General also met with H.E. Ms Emanuela Claudia Del Re, European Union Special Representative for the Sahel (12 May) and H.E. the Honourable Mr Philip Twyford, Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control of New Zealand (17 June).
133. In April, I visited Germany where I delivered a keynote speech at the launch of the competence network “CBWNet” in Berlin, and met with H.E. Ms Annalena Baerbock, Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs of Germany, and Ms Susanne Baumann, Secretary of State at the Federal Foreign Office of Germany. In May, I visited Poland where I met with H.E. Mr Zbigniew Rau, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland, and Mr Grzegorz Piechowiak, Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Technology of Poland. In June, I travelled to the United States of America where I met with H.E. Ms Bonnie Jenkins, Under Secretary of State for Arms Control, Verification and Compliance, and Ms Mallory Stewart, Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance.
134. During the same period, the OPCW welcomed eight new Permanent Representatives who have presented their credentials: from Brunei Darussalam, Ethiopia, India, Libya, Mongolia, Portugal, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates.

### Group visits

135. In addition to continuing to offer virtual group visits, the Secretariat reopened in-person group visits at OPCW Headquarters. It conducted during the intersessional period 17 in-person group visits to OPCW Headquarters and nine virtual visits for a diverse range of groups from Asia, Eastern Europe, GRULAC, and the Western Europe and Others Group (WEOG). This outreach activity offers the general public a unique opportunity to learn about the Convention and the work of the OPCW and is appropriate for educators and students at the university/graduate level, government officials, civil society representatives, and scientists, among others. Details about the group visits, including an online request form, are available on the OPCW website.

Registration by non-governmental organisations for the Twenty-Seventh Session of the Conference of the States Parties

136. Registration by non-governmental organisations for the Twenty-Seventh Session of the Conference of the States Parties opened on 1 July and closes on 14 August. Applications for accreditation to the Conference session will be reviewed by the General Committee of the Conference.

OPCW at 25 social media campaign

137. On 29 April, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the establishment of the OPCW was commemorated at the OPCW Headquarters through a half-day seminar entitled “The OPCW at 25”. To highlight the ongoing relevance of the OPCW’s multifaceted mission, the Secretariat developed a social media outreach campaign which included a resources kit for stakeholders. Twenty-seven delegations from Asia, Eastern Europe, GRULAC, and WEOG shared content related to the anniversary. The campaign’s hashtags were mentioned more than 1,000 times by over 600 unique users, and the OPCW’s tweets alone reached Twitter users’ feeds more than 16 million times. The resources kit is available in the Media Centre of the OPCW’s public website and is intended for use by delegations, National Authorities, civil society, and other stakeholders.