

**Statement by Mr Shahab Ud Din (Pakistan),
Chairperson of the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach (ABEO),
to the Twenty-Seventh Session of the Conference of the States Parties
The Hague, 28 November- 2 December 2022**

Mr Chairperson,
Director-General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I heartily congratulate you, Mr Chairperson, on your election to preside over this important session of the Conference of States Parties.

In January 2022, the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach started a new three-year term with an almost entirely new composition. New capabilities and expertise were added to the Board encompassing areas of chemistry, e-learning with blended methodologies, law, international relations, disarmament and non-proliferation. The board composition also exemplifies OPCW's belief in geographical and gender equality.

With the Secretariat's administrative and technical support, the Board held two meetings this year. The Twelfth Session of the ABEO was held in February online due to COVID-19 restrictions and its Thirteenth Session was held in July in The Hague, for the first time since 2019.

ABEO members conducted several activities during the inter-sessional period, either individually or as a group, to achieve its key objectives as set forth in the Strategic Plan adopted at the Tenth Session of the Board in February 2021. The Board developed activities pertaining to preparation of educational materials for online delivery regarding the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and steps to highlight the ongoing relevance of The Hague Ethical Guidelines, which aim to promote a culture of responsible conduct in chemical sciences and to guard against the misuse of chemistry.

Members of the ABEO remained involved in several courses on chemical ethics¹, management of Chem-Bio Hazards², reconnaissance and sampling Operations in a Highly Contaminated Environment³, and participated in panels implementing the revision of national ordinance to implement the Convention⁴ at the national level. A number of lectures covered diverse topics such as "A talk on chemistry: From

¹ Zhejiang University of Technology (China), April 2022.

² Course held online in Pakistan, from 14 to 18 February 2022. Presentation of a poster entitled "Improving chemical safety in biological laboratories at Institut National d'Hygiene in Rabat (Morocco)" at the Twenty-Third Annual Conference of the European Biosafety Association, Ghent, Belgium, May 2022.

³ Pre-recorded lecture on Chemical Threat Perception in a Highly Contaminated Environment, Pakistan, 14 to 18 March 2022.

⁴ A course on legislative and regulatory issues was held in Pakistan in May 2022.

Electrochemistry to Forensics⁵” and “history of the chemical weapons⁶”. A training course⁷ on digital learning was provided to e-Learning focal points of relevant Divisions of the Secretariat entitled “A model for high-end e-learning at the OPCW”.

Efforts were put forth by worthy members to produce several videos: “Chemical weapons, a threat to human survival⁸” and “Properties and hazards of flammables, reactive chemicals and toxic chemicals⁹”. Role of arms control education in light of recent international context was defined¹⁰ and the members also participated in the IUPAC’s related events such as Global Women’s Breakfast meeting¹¹, the theme of which was ‘empowering diversity in science’. ABEO members contributed to several other courses and seminars on defence, intelligence, non-proliferation, arms control and workshops on chemical security fundamentals¹² and delivered lectures and seminars to professors, parliamentarians, diplomats and government and military officials. A session on the Applied Chemistry Bachelor’s Degree Programme at university level¹³ was also held.

Furthermore, ABEO members contributed to several events at the national level to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention and prepared a video¹⁴ on strengthening the implementation of the Convention in the context of the forthcoming Fifth Review Conference.

As Chairperson of the ABEO, I had the honour to participate in the Sixth session of the Open-Ended Working Group for the Preparations of the Review Conference on 18 October. I shared the main areas of ABEO’s work and received positive feedback on the Board’s activities and States Parties expectations. The Board looks forward to a productive Fifth Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention and remains ready to provide advice on educational aspects, to enlarge the availability of educational materials and enhance the e-Learning offer of the Secretariat.

Concrete areas of current and future work

The ABEO has continued its work on e-Learning, based on the recommendations provided by the ABEO Temporary Working Group (TWG) on e-Learning. The

⁵ Lecture at the Department of Chemistry of the Faculty of Exact and Natural Sciences of the National University of Asuncion (Paraguay).

⁶ Lecture at the University of the Third Age in Canberra (Australia) in June 2022.

⁷ The training was provided on 18 July 2022 at the OPCW Headquarters.

⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l2zILzYTA7U>

⁹ Video in Thai in the framework of a workshop on chemical hazards and management for the Scientific Crime Detection Centre in Thailand.

¹⁰ The role of arms control education was highlighted in the recent application for Phase IV of the EU Nonproliferation and Disarmament Consortium, approved in May 2022.

¹¹ University of Nigeria, Nsukka, February 2022.

¹² NATO Defence College (Rome, January and June 2022); Camilo Jose Cela University (Madrid, February 2022); CESEDEN-Ministry of Defence (Madrid, February 2022); Rey Juan Carlos University (Madrid, February 2022); Complutense University (Madrid, July 2022); Spanish Diplomatic School (Madrid, May 2022).

¹³ Revision of curriculum on chemical management, and chemical safety and security for universities, Pakistan, 2022.

¹⁴ The video on strengthening the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention will be part of a series funded and hosted by London Metropolitan University within the context of the forthcoming Fifth Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Ninth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention.

Secretariat has taken into consideration those recommendations and has identified a suitable platform to better reach external audiences that is being implemented thanks to the European Union funds. This new Learning Management System (LMS) will be ready in the first half of 2023 and will contribute to develop a more resilient organization adapted to blended learning methodologies.

The relevance of engagement with external stakeholders was stressed at the Fourth Review Conference, as well as the importance of enhancing partnerships with chemical industry associations and academia, among others. The ABEO TWG on e-Learning recommended that the OPCW strengthen partnerships with academia and encouraged the OPCW to create a content pack for universities to raise awareness of the OPCW and the Convention. The Secretariat has identified a qualified producer to create a set of interactive modules for universities, that will be used by both arts and sciences faculties worldwide. This content pack will increase awareness of the Convention, foster engagement and encourage and increase the number of research studies on the OPCW and chemical disarmament.

The ABEO has set up several internal working groups to carry out a peer review of the content of the modules, based on areas of expertise, and will contribute to design and implement the dissemination plan to ensure wide usage, including providing its advice on how to best integrate these modules into the university curricula of different regions. Some ABEO Alumni are also contributing to this work.

The ABEO also continued to provide its advice on the translation and dissemination of educational resources, and is of the view that the translation to other languages beyond the OPCW official ones will contribute to enhanced awareness of the Convention and foster engagement of the next-generation worldwide.

ABEO members provided updated information about OPCW professional opportunities at every available opportunity, in different courses, seminars and congresses.

The cooperation of the ABEO with the International Cooperation and Assistance Division continues and the Board stands ready to provide advice to the requesting National Authorities and contribute with tailor made webinars, workshops, and virtual courses and assist them in connecting with diverse audiences.

Mr Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates,

In conclusion, I would also like to take the opportunity to thank Professor Graciela González of Argentina who served as Vice-Chairperson in 2022 and all Board members and observers for their fruitful cooperation and meaningful contributions to our common work.

The ABEO will continue focusing its work on the enhancement of the e-Learning offering of the Secretariat and to provide tailor-made advice to National Authorities, upon the request of States Parties, to assist them in connecting with diverse audiences.

The Board looks forward to the opening of the ChemTech Centre (CCT) and will contribute to the educational and outreach activities of the CCT and its promotion among academic institutions. E-Learning resources developed by the ABEO can contribute towards the establishment of the CCT and enhance it as a research centre

of excellence that will improve training, knowledge sharing and capacity-building among States Parties.

I request that this Statement be published on the OPCW Catalyst and public website.

Thank you very much.