



S/2142/2023

21 March 2023

ENGLISH and FRENCH only

NOTE BY THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT**INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN "CHEMEX AFRICA"
(MULTI-COMPONENT CHEMICAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE
CAPACITY-BUILDING EXERCISE FOR THE AFRICA REGION)
ALGIERS, ALGERIA
23 SEPTEMBER – 4 OCTOBER 2023**

1. In the framework of the implementation of Article X of the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter "the Convention"), the OPCW Technical Secretariat (hereinafter "the Secretariat") continues to develop the capacity of Member States in the area of assistance and protection against incidents and attacks involving both chemical warfare agents and toxic industrial chemicals. In this context, the Secretariat has been active in all subregions of Africa in accordance with the objectives of the OPCW Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa on the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter "the Africa Programme").
2. Thanks to a generous donation by the Government of Canada, the Secretariat will deliver a project to showcase chemical incident response capacity under the Africa Programme, which will involve organising a chemical emergency response exercise for Africa, "CHEMEX Africa". The exercise will be a pan-African multi-component emergency response exercise and demonstration. A primary goal will be to strengthen the mitigation of incidents involving chemical warfare agents and toxic industrial chemicals in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Another main goal will be to further enhance preparedness to respond to such incidents. CHEMEX Africa will promote synergies through demonstrated South-South cooperation in the field of emergency response by ensuring broad participation of instructors from the East African Community (EAC), as well as technical teams from North Africa and the Sahel and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).
3. The project also hopes to cement the technical and financial support of international donors to OPCW efforts in connection with assistance and protection against the use or threat of use of chemical warfare agents or toxic industrial chemicals. Furthermore, CHEMEX Africa aims to promote the engagement of African States Parties from other Regional Economic Communities by showcasing the impact of assistance and protection efforts in Africa.
4. The Secretariat is pleased to open nominations to interested African States Parties that wish to participate in CHEMEX Africa, which is to be held in Algiers, Algeria, from 23 September to 4 October 2023. Other States Parties that wish to participate as observers are also invited to register expressions of interest, although the Secretariat is unable to consider sponsorship for participation as observers or evaluators.



5. CHEMEX Africa falls under the ambit of Article X of the Convention, which focuses, inter alia, on assisting States Parties in strengthening national programmes for the development and improvement of a protective capacity against chemical weapons.
6. CHEMEX Africa will comprise a briefing and pre-exercise workshop; a basic assistance and protection course; a specialised skills demonstration and associated training; a field exercise; and an African stakeholder and VIP demonstration, exercise, and exhibition.
7. The Government of Algeria will host the event and handle all security, safety, medical, and on-site logistical arrangements for the exercise. In addition, the OPCW, as co-organiser, will provide additional support as necessary. The incoming teams will be met at the point of entry and will be escorted to the site of the exercise by representatives from the host country, which will also facilitate border crossings and customs formalities.

CONDUCT OF CHEMEX AFRICA

8. CHEMEX Africa will run over a two-week period from 23 September to 4 October 2023 and will consist of five components, as follows:
 - (a) Component one – briefing/pre-exercise lecture/workshop;
 - (b) Component two – basic assistance and protection course;
 - (c) Component three – specialised skills demonstration and training;
 - (d) Component four – field exercise; and
 - (e) Component five – VIP demonstration and exhibition.
9. The exercise will offer instruction on basic chemical properties, the types and uses of industrial personal protective equipment (PPE), exposure to chemical warfare agents and toxic industrial chemicals, principles of decontamination, physical methods of decontamination, chemical methods of decontamination, analysis of decontamination (in the advanced course of the training cycle), healthcare system for chemical incidents, tools and equipment, and incident command. The exercise is also aimed at facilitating the exchange of information and fostering a network amongst the participants, with a view to enhancing the implementation of Article X of the Convention in the Africa region.
10. Given the purpose of the exercise and its focus on practical skills, nominees should be either civilian or military first responders, or other operational professionals who are involved in the initial response to incidents involving chemical warfare agents or toxic industrial chemicals, inter alia, civil defence, fire and rescue services, police, military chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear units, hazardous materials teams, and medical responders. Participants are expected to be physically fit and able to wear typical PPE for several hours.
11. The Secretariat expects to be able to sponsor a maximum of 70 participants, including instructors from the EAC, technical teams from North Africa and the IGAD, and participants from ECCAS, ECOWAS, and SADC. When proposing nominees for

the course, States Parties should specify whether such sponsorship is a condition for their participation. For sponsored participants, the Secretariat will cover the cost of travel, accommodation, airport transfers, medical insurance, and meals, and will provide a limited subsistence allowance to cover sundry expenses. Representatives of States Parties wishing to attend the exercise as observers or evaluators will need to bear the cost of travel, accommodation, and meals themselves. Applications from female first responders are particularly welcome, and States Parties and National Authorities are strongly encouraged to endorse applications from suitable female applicants.

12. All interested applicants are invited to register their nomination online through Eventus—the OPCW event management system—no later than 28 April 2023. States Parties and National Authorities are strongly encouraged to nominate and endorse the applications by suitable female candidates for the exercise.
13. The Eventus registration link is accessible via the OPCW website at: <http://apps.opcw.org/eventus>. Please note that all questions marked with an asterisk (*) must be answered for the application to be considered.
14. All observers, evaluators, and participants (whether serving as part of a unit or as individual experts) are requested to obtain the necessary visas (including transit visas) before travelling to Algeria.
15. Additional information may be obtained from Mr Babatunde Olowookere, CHEMEX Africa Programme Officer (Tel: +31704163467; Email: babatunde.olwookere@opcw.org) of the Assistance and Protection Branch, International Cooperation and Assistance Division. Please copy chemex@opcw.org in all CHEMEX Africa-related correspondence.

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