



NOTE BY THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT

**CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR
THE TWENTY-FIFTH ANNUAL MEETING OF NATIONAL AUTHORITIES
THE HAGUE, THE NETHERLANDS
22 – 24 NOVEMBER 2023**

1. The Technical Secretariat of the OPCW (hereinafter “the Secretariat”) wishes to invite National Authorities to submit nominations for the Twenty-Fifth Annual Meeting of National Authorities, which will be held at the OPCW Headquarters in The Hague, the Netherlands from 22 to 24 November 2023.
2. The annual meeting of National Authorities serves as an interactive communication and cooperation platform among the National Authorities, and between them and the OPCW. Furthermore, it is intended to promote regional networks in support of the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter “the Convention”) and to enhance regional aspects of international cooperation and assistance activities.
3. The objectives of the annual meeting are to:
 - (a) provide a forum for National Authorities to highlight and work through relevant issues in order to enhance their capacity to comply with their Convention obligations;
 - (b) provide an occasion for the Secretariat and States Parties to interact and discuss ways for the effective provision of capacity-development support through the assessment of needs, sharing of good practices, and improving national programmatic design activities; and
 - (c) promote cooperation between and among National Authorities in order to further the implementation of the Convention at the national and regional levels.
4. The meeting is expected to facilitate the achievement of the following outcomes:
 - (a) a renewed commitment to strengthen cooperation and increase interactions between and among the Secretariat and States Parties and all other stakeholders, producing increased and improved engagements at different levels, including bilateral technical assistance arrangements; and
 - (b) the generation of participants’ recommendations relating to fulfilling national obligations under the Convention and the strengthening of relations between the Secretariat and States Parties.



5. During the meeting, information on progress and developments in capacity-development support offered by the Secretariat will be shared with National Authorities, specifically in relation to Articles VI, VII, X, and XI of the Convention. In addition, there will be updates on science- and policy-related issues.
6. This annual meeting will provide room for substantive discussions on strengthening the engagement of National Authorities with customs administrations and other relevant stakeholders, with a view to the effective implementation of the transfers regime of the Convention. These topics will be discussed in the wider context of new challenges and emerging trends, including the growing number of free trade agreements and threats posed by non-State actors in relation to illicit transfers of scheduled chemicals.
7. National Authorities will also have an opportunity to meet in their respective regional groups, sharing progress in Convention implementation, discussing needs for capacity development and technical support, and identifying approaches that address current or future challenges.
8. Bilateral consultations can be held at dates and times indicated in the provisional programme. National Authorities interested in such consultations should inform the Secretariat in advance of who they wish to meet and the issues they wish to discuss.
9. During the plenary sessions of the meeting, interpretation services will be provided in all of the official languages of the OPCW. French and Spanish interpretation services will be available during discussions of the two relevant regional groups. No interpretation services will be available during bilateral meetings.
10. The provisional programme for the meeting is attached as the Annex to this Note.
11. National Authorities are invited to nominate representatives who are directly involved in Convention implementation, particularly in their day-to-day activities. The Secretariat expects to be able to sponsor a limited number of representatives of National Authorities, with **only one sponsorship slot per requesting National Authority**. States Parties and National Authorities are strongly encouraged to nominate suitable female candidates for the event and support and endorse their applications.
12. Participants are requested to obtain any necessary visas (including transit visas) before travelling to the Netherlands. Participants requiring an entry visa for the Netherlands are advised to contact the nearest diplomatic mission of the Netherlands as soon as possible. Participants needing further assistance may contact the Visa Section of the Secretariat (visa@opcw.org).
13. National Authorities are invited to submit their applications online through Eventus, the OPCW event management system (<https://apps.opcw.org/eventus>), no later than **Tuesday, 15 September 2023**. These applications must be reviewed and endorsed electronically through Eventus by the respective National Authorities, to be followed by a final review and approval by the Secretariat.
14. Additional information about the meeting may be obtained from the Implementation Support Branch of the International Cooperation and Assistance Division. The contact persons are Mr Rene Betancourt (rene.betancourt@opcw.org), Ms Olukemi Adenuga (olukemi.adenuga@opcw.org), Mr Victor Barros Correia (victor.barros-correia@opcw.org), and Mr Alberto Fernandez (alberto.fernandez@opcw.org).

Annex: Provisional Programme

Annex

PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME

	Agenda item
Wednesday, 22 November 2023	
Morning	<p>Registration of participants</p> <p><u>Opening session:</u> Opening address by Ambassador Fernando Arias, Director-General of the Secretariat</p> <p><u>Group Photo</u></p> <p><u>Presentations by the Secretariat:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Updates on capacity-development activities of the International Cooperation and Assistance Division – Highlights of science- and policy-related developments – Updates on verification and related projects – Updates on inspections and related issues
Afternoon	<p>Bilateral meetings with relevant Secretariat staff /other States Parties (to be requested in advance)</p> <p><u>Regional group meetings:</u> Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Western Europe and Others</p> <p>Reception hosted by the Director-General</p>
Thursday, 23 November 2023	
Morning	<p>Regional group meetings – feedback from rapporteurs</p> <p>Thematic session 1 Customs authorities as a key national stakeholder in Convention implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Introduction to session 1 – Implementing the Convention transfers regime for scheduled chemicals: current trends and challenges (World Customs Organization–WCO) – The important role of customs laboratories for implementing the Convention – Presentations by States Parties: Coordinating National Authorities and customs activities related to Convention implementation: challenges and best practices

	Agenda item
Afternoon	<p>Thematic Session 2</p> <p>The importance of the Convention in addressing relevant security threats, including those arising from non-State actors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Convention national implementing legislation: an effective tool to mitigate risks associated with the acquisition or use of chemical weapons by non-State actors <p><u>Panel discussion:</u> Opportunities for effective cross-border and regional cooperation in addressing Convention-related threats involving non-State actors (WCO, 1540 Committee, OPCW, and two States Parties)</p>
<i>Friday, 24 November 2023</i>	
Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The Convention National Implementation Framework (NIF) one year on: Preliminary assessment of results – Implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004)– National action plans: Lessons learned and potential synergies – Presentations by States Parties: NIF piloting in Costa Rica, Togo, and Zambia
Afternoon	<p>National capacity development through the Mentorship/Partnership Programme for National Authorities: experience gained and lessons learned</p> <hr/> <p>Open plenary: reflections, actions, and way forward</p> <hr/> <p>Closing session by the Deputy Director-General</p> <hr/> <p>Bilateral meetings with relevant Secretariat staff/other States Parties (to be requested and arranged in advance)</p>