



### **REPORT BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE WORKING GROUP ON GEOGRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION TO THE TWENTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

1. The Executive Council (the Council) at its 103rd Session, adopted the draft decision entitled “Establishment of a Working Group on Geographical Representation” (EC-103/DEC.1, dated 12 July 2023), which established “a working group, open to all interested States Parties, to work in close cooperation with the Secretariat to identify and recommend concrete measures oriented at achieving a wider and more diverse pool of professionals via enhanced candidate outreach and sourcing strategies and recruitment processes”. The Council further decided that “the working group is requested to deliver an action plan and to report on its conclusions to the Conference of the States Parties at its next session”.
2. Following Council decision EC-103/DEC.1, the Chairperson of the Council, at the meeting of the Bureau of the Council held on 18 September 2023, proposed the nomination of the representative of the Latin America and the Caribbean Group, Ambassador Jaime Moscoso Valenzuela of Chile, as Chairperson of the Working Group on Geographical Representation (WGGR).
3. Following the appointment of its Chairperson, the WGGR held five hybrid meetings. The meetings took place on 4 October, 18 October, 31 October, 1 November, and 9 November 2023.
4. The WGGR began its work by noting elements concerning its mandate, a comprehensive view of the outstanding issues that were going to be addressed along the process, and the nomination of regional focal points to assist the Chairperson’s work. Along the several meetings, the WGGR took into account all the deliberations and exchanges of views, as well as the written proposals, comments, and consultations submitted by States Parties.
5. The Technical Secretariat (the Secretariat) delivered to the WGGR comprehensive information regarding the figures and trends of the OPCW, procedural clarifications, the benchmarking of other international organisations, and other information that formed the basis of the discussions for several items on the agenda.
6. Early in the process, the Chairperson of the WGGR convened with the Secretariat for the alignment of the goals of the Working Group; subsequently, the Chairperson reviewed the following relevant OPCW documentation, facilitated by the Secretariat:
  - (a) Employer branding and outreach strategy (draft 1);
  - (b) Administrative Directive AD/PER/29/Rev.5 (dated 17 February 2022) – Recruitment and Selection Procedures;

- (c) Staff Regulations and Interim Staff Rules of the Secretariat (as amended in OPCW-S/DGB/28, dated 21 December 2018);
  - (d) Recommendations of the External Auditor (EC-104/S/3, dated 14 September 2023);
  - (e) Annual report of the Office of Internal Oversight for 2019 (EC-94/DG.4 C-25/DG.2, dated 24 April 2020), and 2022 (EC-103/DG.8 C-28/DG.3, dated 1 June 2023);
  - (f) Junior Professional Officer Programme process overview at the Secretariat (S/1513/2017, dated 10 July 2017); and
  - (g) Internship process overview.
7. During the process, the Secretariat provided invaluable support to the Chairperson of the WGGR, particularly the Administration Division, the Human Resources Branch, and the Office of the Legal Adviser.
8. The following members were appointed as focal points of their respective regional groups: Canada (Western European and Other States Group) and the Islamic Republic of Iran (Asian Group). The representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Eastern European Group) and Ghana (African Group) also participated in the informal consultation process as coordinators of their respective regional groups. The Chairperson of the WGGR held five meetings with the focal points and the regional coordinators, where they discussed and exchanged views on the written proposals and the drafting process.
9. Throughout the process, the Chairperson took special consideration of the need to work in strict conformity with paragraph 44 of Article VIII of the Chemical Weapons Convention and in compliance with the paramount consideration of the “necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity”, as well as of the need to pay due regard to “the importance of recruiting the staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible”. In addition, another matter taken into consideration was that any proposed action or measure would not considerably interfere with the workload, procedures, or operative functions of the Secretariat.
10. After reviewing the documentation and noting elements worthy of assessment and improvement, the Chairperson of the WGGR prepared the Action Plan on Geographical Representation (Annex 1 to C-28/DEC/CRP.11, dated 24 November 2023), divided into the following four areas:

Outreach and sourcing strategies

- (a) The Action Plan on Geographical Representation calls on the Secretariat to finalise and launch the branding and outreach strategy, including a tailored talent acquisition programme to support under-represented regions; a reinforced applicant data collection system to monitor trends in under-represented regions; and further engagement and deployment of outreach activities with relevant stakeholders to help ensure that potential candidates are supported in preparing for and competing in the recruitment process.

Engagement of National Authorities

- (b) The Action Plan on Geographical Representation requests National Authorities to consider defining their own strategies and action plans to strengthen and leverage the OPCW talent acquisition process, as well as to activate an OPCW web platform for National Authority networking.

Programmes for Junior Professional Officers, internships, and fellowships

- (c) The Action Plan on Geographical Representation requests the promotion of a trust fund to allow for allocation of funds for eligible candidates from under-represented regions, as well as an increment in the internship stipend by 20%. With regards to the recruitment process, the Action Plan on Geographical Representation requests the Secretariat to reinforce its recruitment and selection procedures with regard to geographical representation.

Recruitment process

- (d) The Action Plan on Geographical Representation calls on the Secretariat to reinforce its recruitment and selection procedures by including geographical representation considerations in each step of its procedures, by encouraging further inclusion of applicants from under-represented regions, by further disseminating OPCW vacancies among relevant stakeholders, and by ensuring standard terms for all candidates to allow them to apply under equal conditions to compete for OPCW vacancies (Annex 2 to C-28/DEC/CRP.11).
11. The WGGR has thus concluded its mandate and as a deliverable it has produced the “Action Plan on Geographical Representation”, which includes the four main instruments: Outreach and sourcing strategies; Engagement of National Authorities; Programmes for Junior Professional Officers, internships, and fellowships; and Recruitment process.
  12. As part of the Chairperson’s assessment, especially considering the legal and administrative aspects related to the operative function of the Secretariat, the WGGR prepared a draft decision (C-28/DEC/CRP.11) proposing that the Secretariat prepare and submit three deliverables to the Council: a strategic framework, an implementation programme, and a monitoring and reporting mechanism, aiming to ensure an effective and streamlined implementation of the Action Plan on Geographical Representation.
  13. Considering the work undertaken by the States Parties and the Secretariat, through a constructive and collaborative dialogue, and the significant progress made along the consultation process, it was possible to gain broad support from the States Parties which would prepare the ground for a consensus-based adoption of the Action Plan on Geographical Representation.
  14. The Chairperson of the WGGR wishes to express his gratitude to the Secretariat for its support throughout the process, as well as to all States Parties for their active engagement and cooperation in the facilitations.