



The OPCW Africa Bulletin

Volume 2

NOVEMBER 2021



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- *Cover photo: Ms. Kahe Johanna Dijerenge, Forensic Scientist, Namibian Police Forensic Science Institute, attending the Online Course on the Enhancement of Laboratory Skills (LC-MS), organised by the OPCW in partnership with VERIFIN, from 23 to 27 August 2021. The picture is a courtesy of Ms. Dijerenge.*
 - *Pictures illustrating OPCW online training events are courtesy of the participants.*
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Message from the Director-General

Dear Readers,



It gives me great pleasure to extend a warm welcome to you to this bulletin and I thank you for your interest in the cooperation between the OPCW and Africa.

This is the second time that the Technical Secretariat issues a special bulletin on the OPCW Africa Programme. The goal is to give you a closer look into the recent developments in the Programme and share insights into the various areas of collaboration that so happily exist between the Organisation and the Africa region.

The Africa Programme was designed to support African Members States in the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and to address their needs and priorities in relation to the Convention. These needs are more focused on security and development.

In 2021, the implementation of the Programme has continued to progress apace, in accordance with the eight objectives of the fifth phase (2020-2022). A total of 52 capacity-building and technical assistance activities are expected to benefit African participants this year, including 29 events organised specifically for the Africa region.

Moreover, the Technical Secretariat has sponsored the participation of over a hundred African scientists in international academic conferences and funded several African research projects and fellowships. The Secretariat has also sponsored a transfer of laboratory equipment from Germany to Sudan.

In parallel, the Secretariat has continued to advance strategic initiatives under the Programme, including in areas of partnership development, stakeholders' engagement, and resource mobilisation for extra budgetary projects.

While implementing the Programme, the Secretariat has continued to be attentive to the views and preferences of the Programme stakeholders and beneficiaries. It is in this perspective that the Secretariat has been regularly reporting on the progress in the Africa Programme to the Programme Steering Committee and to the African Member States, in addition to the OPCW Policy-making Organs.

Details regarding these developments are presented in this edition of the bulletin. Furthermore, the bulletin reflects insights from African National Authorities, in relation to the implementation of the Convention in their countries. I thank them for their enriching contributions.

I should also like to thank all donors and partners of the Africa Programme for their generous support and reiterate the Secretariat's unwavering commitment towards promoting chemistry for purposes not prohibited under the Convention in Africa, for a safe, secure and developed continent.

I am pleased to share with you that the Secretariat has initiated in September 2021 the construction of the future OPCW ChemTech Centre. Due to start operations in 2023, the Centre will inter alia scale up and expand the action of the OPCW in the area of capacity building for the benefit of the Member States, including in the framework of the Africa Programme. Stay tuned as we keep sharing updates in this regard.

I close by thanking you once again for your interest and I wish you an enjoyable read.

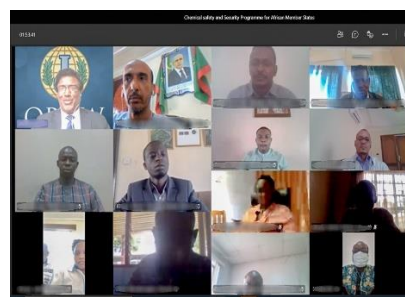
Fernando Arias, OPCW Director-General

Main Developments in the OPCW Africa Programme in 2021

Programme implementation

The implementation of the Africa Programme continued to progress apace in 2021, in line with the planning of its fifth phase. Throughout the year, the Secretariat has significantly intensified the delivery of its targeted activities and has been advancing the eight objectives of the fifth phase concurrently.

In terms of capacity building and provision of technical assistance, which constitute the backbone of the Programme, a total of 52 relevant activities addressing all eight objectives of the fifth phase have been scheduled for delivery by the Secretariat in 2021, including 29 activities specifically for the Africa region.



Activities included targeted training courses, workshops, forums, exercises, technical consultations, and coaching sessions. Areas of these activities range from improving the national implementation of the Convention to enhancing the effectiveness of National Authorities, improving control over cross-border transfers of scheduled chemicals, developing assistance and protection capabilities against chemical incidents and attacks, enhancing knowledge and skills on chemical safety and security management, and upgrading laboratory competencies across the continent.

As at 15 October 2021, 45 training activities had already been delivered, including 22 activities organised specifically for the Africa region. These 45 activities accommodated over 800 African participants from 40 African Member States¹, which already far exceeds the average number of African participants under the Programme per year (around 400 participants).

Due to the continued restrictions imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, the Secretariat has continued to use online modalities for the conduct of capacity-building activities. In addition to live sessions with participants, the Secretariat has been using diverse online learning tools for the delivery of training courses. These tools include self-paced e-learning modules, recorded presentations, scenario-based exercises, and quizzes.



¹ Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, the Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe

In parallel, the Secretariat has continued to closely monitor the COVID-19 pandemic situation and has been maintaining its readiness to resume in-person training activities as soon as conditions allow. In the future, online learning will continue to be leveraged, as appropriate, to supplement, complement, and thus further enhance in-person capacity-building activities.



In addition to capacity-building and technical assistance activities, the OPCW is sponsoring 5 fellowships benefitting African scientists in 2021: a fellow from Nigeria (hosted in South Africa), Zimbabwe (in Switzerland), Cameroon and Uganda (both in Germany) and Uganda (in Finland). A further five sponsored fellowships are expected to take place in 2022.

The Secretariat has also provided sponsorship to four research projects for African scientists in 2021. Eight additional African research projects have been co-funded with the International Foundation for Science (IFS). Under the Conference Support Programme, the Secretariat sponsored two international scientific events held in July and August 2021, which accommodated, inter alia, over a hundred scientists from Africa.

Further, under the Equipment Exchange Programme, the Secretariat completed in April 2021 the transfer of a Gas Chromatography-Mass Spectrometer System donated by Germany to Sudan.

Programme funding

The Africa Programme continues to be funded essentially through the OPCW regular budget. In addition, extrabudgetary resources are also used to further expand the Programme's depth, reach, and impact. In this context, specific activities have been attracting in-kind and financial support from the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and the European Union. Moreover, in-kind support has been provided by African Member States co-organising activities under the Programme.

Special projects for extra-budgetary funding

The Secretariat has continued in 2021 its fundraising activities to mobilise resources for the series of special projects for extra-budgetary funding it has announced in July 2020 for the benefit of the Africa region.

The United States of America has already provided a voluntary contribution fully covering the estimated funds required for Project 3: "Specialised analytical chemistry course for laboratories supporting customs services in Africa". Resources from the OPCW Special Fund for Capacity Building for Laboratories have been assigned to Project 5: "Specialised course on equipment maintenance and troubleshooting for laboratories in African States Parties". Suitable laboratories are being identified for the co-organisation and hosting of the specialised laboratory courses under Projects 3 and 5 on a face-to-face basis.

Furthermore, in April 2021, the Secretariat submitted project proposals 1 and 4, respectively "CHEMEX Africa: Building Chemical Incident Response Capacity under the OPCW Africa Programme" and the "Peer-to-Peer Training for African Customs Training Institutions", for the

consideration of the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction (hereinafter “the Global Partnership”).

Following the presentation of the two above-mentioned projects, among others, to the Global Partnership, during meetings held in April and June 2021, the Government of Canada indicated in July 2021 that it is considering providing funding for the two projects. Discussions are under way between the Secretariat and Canada in this regard. The Secretariat continues its resource mobilisation efforts for the remaining special projects.

Moreover, in October 2021, France has contributed €230,000 to fund two additional special projects under the Africa Programme. These projects concern a/“Strengthening mitigation capacities and preparedness to respond to chemical incidents in French-speaking West African SPs” and b/“Workshop for French-speaking African States Parties on the Role of National Implementing Legislation in Addressing Threats Arising from Non-State Actors.”



Africa Programme Steering Committee

In 2021, the Africa Programme Steering Committee continued to provide support, advice, and guidance to the Secretariat for the implementation of the Programme. The Committee held its third meeting successfully online on 25 June 2021, under the chairmanship of H.E. Ambassador Lawrence Lenayapa of Kenya, Committee Chairperson, and with the participation of over 60 participants representing Committee members and observers, as well as the Secretariat.



The Committee took note with great appreciation of the progress achieved in the Programme implementation despite the constraints imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic and commended the Secretariat for its work, as well as the Programme partners and donors, for their valuable contributions.

The fourth meeting of the Committee is scheduled to take place on 15 November 2021.

Partnerships and cooperation, stakeholder engagement, and Programme visibility

The Secretariat continued in 2021 to engage actively with a variety of relevant Programme partners and stakeholders to enhance synergies, deliver on planned projects and activities, and explore new and effective partnerships. The list of partners features national, regional, and global organisations that are relevant to the Programme implementation and development, including the World Customs Organization (WCO), the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), African Regional Economic Communities, government agencies, academia, laboratories, research institutions, and chemical industries and associations.

The Secretariat also submitted to the African Union Commission on Political Affairs, Peace and Security an action plan aimed at revitalising the bilateral cooperation between the two organisations. The

Commission warmly welcomed the OPCW initiative and contacts have since been maintained throughout 2021 to revitalise the bilateral cooperation along the lines of the proposed action plan.

In addition, a knowledge-sharing meeting on the Africa Programme was held on 13 April 2021 with the Implementation Support Unit of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC-ISU) and UNODA, at their request, in the framework of the potential development and coordination, by the BWC-ISU, of a “signature initiative” on biosecurity in Africa.

To maximise the impact of the Programme, the Secretariat kept engaging in 2021, based on post-participation plans, the alumni of capacity-building activities organised under the Programme.

The OPCW Africa Network has continued to be regularly maintained and developed in 2021. Counting over 850 active members, the network continued to be effectively used as a platform for expertise and information sharing, on chemistry-related developments, OPCW capacity-building events, sponsorships, and employment opportunities within the Technical Secretariat.

The OPCW Africa Bulletin constitutes another tool employed by the Secretariat since the launch of the fifth phase of the Programme to enhance the visibility of the Programme’s activities and the continued engagement of partners and beneficiaries alike.



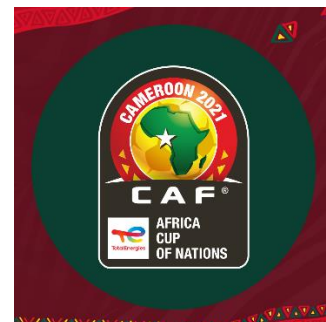
OPCW Supports Cameroon in Preparations to Host the African Cup of Nations (9 January-6 February 2022)

The Africa Cup of Nations is a major event requiring special security measures, including the preparation of a chemical emergency response plan. The preparation for such event involves a large number of national stakeholders and presents complex security challenges for the host State. Chemical threat is to be taken into consideration when preparing for such major event.

At the request of the CWC National Authority of Cameroon, the OPCW Technical Secretariat is bringing its contribution to support the hosting nation in the preparation of the continental tournament. Two specific events have been scheduled in this context:

Webinar on Chemical Security Response Measures and Emergency Response Arrangements for Major Public Events (22-23 September 2021)

The webinar offered an interactive platform for Member States from different regions to share their experiences with Cameroon on major events preparations. Participants examined different aspects of the preparations, including planning, training, exercising, and inter-agency cooperation. The event featured expert speakers from the Population Protection Institute of the Czech Republic, National CBRN Centre in the United Kingdom, the Defense Ministry of Brazil, National Emergency Management Agency of Nigeria, the National Authority of Cameroon for the CWC, and Everbridge (a leading company specialised in critical event management).



Specific areas of focus included:

- Gathering lessons learned from States parties that had hosted congregation of a large number of people, such as the Olympic Games, the FIFA World Cup, international marathons, etc.;
- Inform the hosting nation on how to manage national risk and threat assessments;
- Sharing experience and good practices from different regions on how to prevent non-State actors and violent extremist groups to use major events as stages for criminal acts and acts of terrorism;
- Developing appropriate contingency and emergency response plans for terrorist attacks on a State Party planning to host a large sporting tournament.

The webinar was attended by 162 participants from 31 OPCW African Member States: Algeria, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Djibouti, Cameroon, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, South Africa, Sudan, Uganda, Togo, Tunisia, Zambia, Zimbabwe. Participants are majorly First Responders, Scientists, High-Level Officials from Police, Military, Fire-Brigades, Civil-Defence Corps, Assistance and Protection experts, Laboratory personnel, as well as a High-Level Government Officials.

National Workshop on Emergency Response Mitigation against Chemical Threat to Major Public Events (November 2021)

This national workshop is intended to complement the afore-mentioned webinar. It will be organised by the OPCW in collaboration with and funding from the CWC National Authority of Cameroon and will take place within the framework of the OPCW Africa Programme. Experts from other Members States will join the national workshop as resource persons.

Using the train-the-trainers approach, the workshop is designed to provide Cameroonian planners and response organisations with a thorough understanding of the chemical threat, agents and likely attack mechanisms. It will also contribute to strengthening chemical emergency response planning, preparation and delivery, and will develop participants' expertise in terms of tools and techniques used to explore and conduct chemical risk assessments.

The event will accommodate CBRN emergency preparedness and response teams (i.e. civil defence, fire/rescue department, police, military CBRN Units, HAZMAT teams, medical responders, etc), emergency planners and civilian and military first responders.

Experience-Sharing by African States Parties

This section of the bulletin aims at sharing experiences from African States Parties in connection to the national implementation of the Convention.

These experiences highlight notably the challenges faced and best practices identified by concerned States Parties in relation to the domestication of the Convention and the daily functioning of a National Authority. Publicising such national experiences contributes effectively to knowledge sharing and awareness raising among National Authorities and other CWC stakeholders.

For this edition, the following articles are included. They were received from Nigeria, South Africa and Mauritania:

- “Update on National Implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention in Nigeria”
- “Implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention during the COVID-19 Pandemic in South Africa”
- “Glimpses of the Activities of the Mauritania’s National Liaison Centre with the OPCW in 2021”

Update on National Implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention in Nigeria



by Mr. Chukwuka Cyril Okwuosa, Deputy Director/Secretary, National Authority on Chemical & Biological Weapon Conventions (NAC&BWC) of Nigeria

Brief Overview of CWC National Implementation in Nigeria

Nigeria signed the Chemical Weapon Convention on 13 January 1993 and ratified it on 1 March 1999. The main objective of the Convention is to prohibit the production, acquisition, stockpiling, retention, transfer and use of chemical weapons as well as providing for their destruction. The Convention also encourages free trade among State Parties and provides for international cooperation and exchange of scientific and technical information for purposes not prohibited under the Convention.

Nigeria has since been endeavoring to fulfil her obligations as a State Party to the Convention. A National Authority, “National Authority on chemical and Biological Weapons Conventions” (NAC&BWC), was established under the Political and Economic Affairs Office (PEAO), Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation.

In line with the provisions of the Nigerian Constitution, the NAC&BWC had drafted a Chemical and Biological Weapons Prohibition Bill and submitted it to the National Assembly (Senate and House of Representatives) to legislate and pass it into law. The draft bill is currently pending approval in the National Assembly. The NAC&BWC is making all efforts to ensure that the bill is passed.

Nigeria has continued to meet her obligation of submitting Annual Declaration of Past Activities (ADPA) to the OPCW. The Annual Declaration of Past Activities (ADPA) for 2020 was submitted in March 2021 via the OPCW Secure Information Exchange platform (SIX).

Good Practices for CWC National Implementation in Nigeria

Several measures taken by Nigeria to facilitate and promote the national implementation of the CWC have proven to be good practices.

Among these is the establishment of an Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) that serves as a platform to enhance the implementation of the Convention at the national level in Nigeria. The objective of the IMC is to bring minds together with stakeholders and discuss matters of common interest that will assist in implementing the Convention. The IMC is being coordinated by the NAC&BWC.

The Committee comprises over forty (40) relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies. They are all stakeholders in the national implementation of the CWC. The IMC meeting is convened on a quarterly basis or as need arises. The most recent IMC meeting was held in May 2021, with more than seventy (70) participants.



Furthermore, the NAC&BWC organises awareness raising/sensitization workshops for chemical industries in Nigeria. The objective of the workshop is, among others, to raise awareness among relevant national stakeholders and representatives of the chemical industries in any chosen State of Nigeria, on the CWC and its national implementation in relation to the chemical industry. The NAC&BWC also enhances the robust co-operation between government regulatory agencies and the chemical industries towards strengthening sound management of chemicals as well as chemical sustainability and security.

Separately, the NAC&BWC undertakes on-site inspections to chemical industries spread across Nigeria to verify implementation, utilisation, storage and custody of scheduled chemicals and their precursors listed under the CWC. We also advise the chemical industries to keep the chemicals safe and secure.

In terms of coordination of capacity-building, Nigerian candidates to OPCW programmes receive NAC&BWC's endorsement before submitting their applications to the OPCW.

In the area of assistance and protection against chemical incidents and attacks, Nigeria has developed a National Chemical and Biological Emergencies Preparedness and Response Plan which had been approved by the Federal Executive Council (FEC) of Nigeria headed by His Excellency the President of Nigeria. The plan outlines policy actions to be undertaken by national stakeholders to prepare or respond to chemical and biological incidents. Each stakeholder has a role to play e.g. Police, Army, Fire Service, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Department of State Services (DSS), Office Of the National Security Adviser (ONSA), National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), etc.

Challenges

Despite our daily efforts and the progress achieved, several challenges remain to be addressed to ensure the full and effective implementation of the Convention in Nigeria. The key challenges are:

Firstly: As mentioned earlier, the draft Chemical and Biological Weapons Prohibition Bill is pending approval at the National Assembly. The NAC&BWC continues its endeavors to have the Bill passed.

Secondly: chemical industries are distributed across different regions of the nation's vast land mass. This renders the on-site inspection of these industries challenging and resource demanding.

Thirdly: Because of the large population of Nigeria, awareness/sensitization programmes to enlighten the populace requires wider coverage and this is cost intensive.

Fourthly: Some players in the chemical industry attempt to evade regulatory authorities to maximize their profit. We do keep a close watch on such attempts while continuing our educational and awareness-raising role vis-à-vis the industry.

Implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention during the COVID-19 Pandemic in South Africa



By Ms Spokazi Manakele, Secretariat to the CWC National Authority of South Africa

As the focus of the world shifted to the COVID-19 pandemic and the ways of working changed, international organisations had to reorganise their methods of supporting national implementation efforts while governments worldwide had to think of smarter ways of working. This was not an easy feat considering that there was an array of approaches that could have been taken, depending on the resources available to a particular State Party or international organisation. For South Africa, the collective efforts of all stakeholders was necessary in the maintenance of the regulatory standards, with the adoption of new technologies and coordinated action, resulting in the compliance ‘engine still running’.

The non-proliferation legislation in South Africa, and particularly, the Chemical Weapons Convention, is implemented by the South African Council for the Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (the Council). This is done in terms of the Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction Act in 1993 (Act No. 87 of 1993). As the South African National Authority in terms of the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Council has been actively involved in ensuring that South Africa’s obligations in terms of the Convention are fulfilled through the continuous involvement of its national stakeholders in the mechanisms that have been established to support the implementation of the Convention in the country. This coordinated system has resulted in the promulgation of the necessary legislation which now is being amended and supporting regulations and enhanced awareness of industry of their national and international obligations.

The South African chemical industry has, over the years, been analysed through questionnaires to determine the control status of chemical facilities. Although only a small percentage of the chemical industry is declarable to the OPCW, information sessions are held regularly to inform industry of their national and international obligations as stipulated in the legislation. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, these sessions were held in-person. The sessions have increased awareness of the legislation and keeps industry informed of changes and updates. These activities were impacted by COVID-19, as well as other CWC national implementation activities.

Just before the country went on lockdown, a notice regarding the interim measures for interaction between the National Authority and the Industry, providing necessary information in terms of how the National Authority will be operating during the lockdown in light of the pandemic, was communicated with the industry. There is also a dedicated telephone line and general email, which was established and available 24 hours for customs and industry related enquiries. Additionally, the South African National Authority established mechanisms to ensure that the activities continue, and the industry would not be negatively impacted. During the pandemic, the National Authority ensured that the website was maintained and updated with information relevant to all aspects of non-proliferation that could affect the South African industry.

Figure 1 below illustrates the updated information placed on the website, informing industry about the changes.

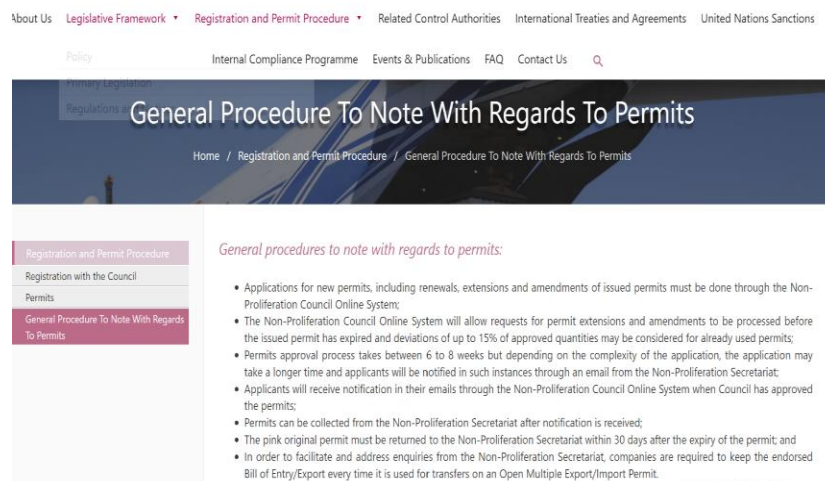


Figure 1: Updated Council Website

Concerning outreach programmes, during normal circumstances these activities comprised of industry visits and industry seminars. During the pandemic, these activities were conducted virtually. The virtual activities proved to be efficient because they were able to target larger audiences as opposed to in-person meetings. These were also cost effective, considering that the chemical industry would spend less on travel expenses to attend the sessions. It is important to note that one of the factors that contributed to the National Authority receiving full cooperation from industry was the existing relationship fostered with the industry prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Similarly, in person stakeholder engagements was replaced by virtual meetings. The transition was seamless. There were some challenges initially, but these were overcome in no time. The implementation of the Convention was made possible because of effective engagement between the National Authority and its stakeholders.

Figure 2 below illustrates training session that was held by the National Authority for stakeholders.

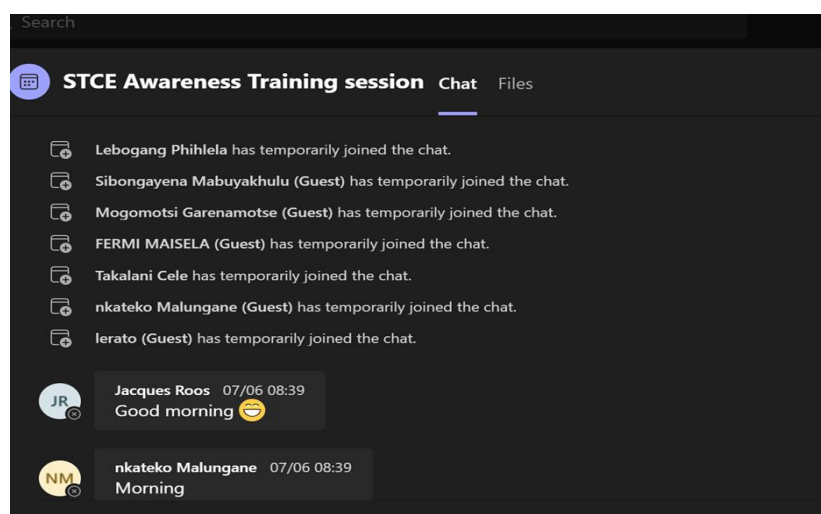


Figure 2: Training session for stakeholders

One of the responsibilities of the South African National Authority is to administer registration of entities that have in their possession or control any goods that is considered to be controlled in terms of the Non-Proliferation Act, and process licenses for the chemical industry that deals with transferring of scheduled

chemicals. The registration and the licensing processes were previously done manually, where the industry would submit the permit application or registration application to the National Authority for evaluation and processing.

To ease the administrative burden and improve service delivery, the Council embarked on the development of an electronic, internet-based system for submission of registration and permit applications. The system allowed a more streamlined application portal for industry and a more streamlined approval process for the National Authority. It was during the pandemic that the online registration and permit system was launched, enabling industry to submit their registration and permit applications through an internet-based application portal. This system was launched at a critical time and enabled the National Authority to continue processing and issuing permits to industry while the country was still on lockdown.

Concerning the national implementation of Article VI of the Convention, the National Authority was able to collect declaration information from declarable industries. The Annual Declaration of Past Activities as well as the Annual Declaration of Anticipated Activities were prepared and submitted on time using Electronic Declaration Information System Tool.

Through a coordinated mechanism, South Africa annually participates and contributes to the international cooperation and assistance programmes of the OPCW to enhance the capacity of States Parties in Africa to implement the Convention and derive peaceful benefits in the field of chemical activities not prohibited by the Convention. During the pandemic, these programmes had to be postponed indefinitely.

The pandemic had also affected commencement of the Twinning Programme between Protechnik Laboratories of South Africa and TNO Laboratories of the Netherlands. Even though all the necessary formalities were concluded between the two laboratories and the Technical Secretariat, the initiation of the programme was placed on hold due to the restrictions imposed due to the pandemic.

One of the main challenges that South Africa experienced during the pandemic is the delay in amending the CWC related regulations. The changes that were adopted by the Conference of States Parties (CSP) at its Twenty-Fourth Session were incorporated in revised secondary legislation promulgated earlier this year, reflecting the changes in the Schedules of Chemicals. Unfortunately, South Africa could not meet the target date of June 2020 due to COVID-19. A further delay being experienced is the promulgation of the full text of the CWC national legislation to reflect the amended CWC.

Figure 3 below displays the revised secondary legislation promulgated on 8 April 2021, reflecting the changes in the Schedules of Chemicals.

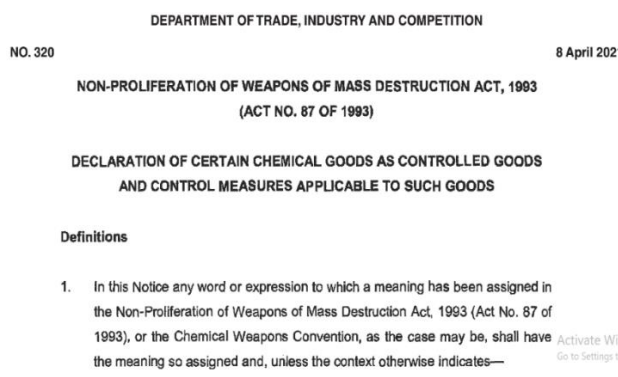


Figure 3: Government Notice No. 320 of 08 April 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic has reminded the National Authority that continuous engagement with industry is important for them to be aware that a support structure is available to address their regulatory and compliance requirements. Due to uncertainty around the pandemic, industry needed reassurance and information regarding how to comply with obligations such as renewal of registration and applications for permits, or whether they could trade at all. The availability of support and information placed them at ease when they were advised about how the National Authority would operate during lockdown.

The National Authority has also adopted a multi-stakeholder approach in the implementation of the obligations and regularly liaises with all necessary stakeholders in the non-proliferation arena to ensure that an informed approach is taken to all decisions. A good relationship and regular communication were maintained with stakeholders and they were willing to provide assistance when required. Constant communication was maintained during the lockdown period. Hence, stakeholders were also involved during the development of the internet-based registration and permit system, assisting in testing of the system before it was launched.

In conclusion, our experience in the implementation of the Convention during these uncertain times has shown that communication, coordination and collaboration amongst all of the relevant stakeholders and industry, involved in the control process are key steps to achieving an effective control system. There is always room for improvement, such as more effective compliance mechanisms, or enhanced outreach and training efforts, and the National Authority could possibly explore more creative ways of conducting national inspections virtually, to ensure compliance with the provisions of the legislation and the convention but the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us to adapt to crisis situations and probably made us more resilient!

Glimpses of the Activities of the Mauritania's National Liaison Centre with the OPCW in 2021



By Mr Ishagh Mohamed Moussa, President of the National Authority of Radiation Protection, Safety and Nuclear Security (ARSN), Prime Ministry, Islamic Republic of Mauritania

As part of the implementation of its obligations under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction (CWC), the Islamic Republic of Mauritania designated the “National Authority for Radiation Protection, Safety and Nuclear Safety” (ARSN) as National Liaison Centre with the OPCW. This designation was made by order of the Prime Minister on 6 April 2017.

As such, the Centre serves, inter alia, as Mauritania’s focal point of contact and collaboration with the OPCW, and with the CWC National Authorities of other States Parties. In this context, the Centre endeavours to fulfil Mauritania’s obligations under the Convention, including the strict implementation of the CWC by any natural or legal person under the jurisdiction or control of the State of Mauritania.

The Centre assists the government in the design and implementation of the national policy on the prohibition of chemical weapons and on the control of other chemicals related to the CWC. It also supervises and issues licenses for the import and export of chemicals and inspect their storage and use locations.

Despite the restrictions imposed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Centre continues performing its activities in the framework of the CWC implementation. Work continued to ensure the setup of an action plan for the implementation of the CWC provisions, the development of national legislation, the design of an inspection booklet, the implementation of a national training programme, and the setup of a national emergency and response plan.

Declarations are now regularly submitted to the OPCW. The inventory of chemicals, importers and user companies is effective. Officials of the Centre participate regularly in training courses organised by the OPCW to maintain and develop their knowledge and expertise.

As part of participation in OPCW training events, Mauritania benefited from an OPCW National Law Review Forum held on 23 February 2021. Mauritanian delegates received tailored legal assistance aimed at ensuring that national legislative and regulatory frameworks are in place to comprehensively implement all Mauritania’s obligations under the CWC.

In turn, the Centre organises several trainings for national stakeholders. In 2021, training courses have been organised on the transport of dangerous substances and on the risk and crisis management in the event of a chemical accident.



*Participation of Mauritania in an OPCW online National Law Review Forum
(23 February 2021)*



*Training course "Risk and crisis management in the event of a chemical accident"
(Nouakchott 17-20 May 2021)*



*High-level Workshop on the "Transportation of Dangerous Substances"
(Nouakchott, 2-3 August 2021)*

Recent Arrivals in the Team of the International Cooperation and Assistance Division

✚ The Secretariat wishes to extend a warm welcome to the new colleagues in the ICA Division Team:

- Mr. O'Neil Hamilton, Head, Assistance and Protection Branch (APB), who replaces Mr. Shawn DeCaluwe, starting from mid-Nov 2021
- Mr. Roman Warchol, Senior Programme Officer (ICB), who replaced Mr. Sergey Zinoviev
- Ms. Iryna Iarema, Senior Programme Officer (ICB), who replaced Mr. Rohan Perera
- Mr. Saurabh Bhandari, Programme Officer (ICB), who replaced Ms. Halimatussa'adiah Mat Som
- Mr. Taeon Kim, Programme Officer (ICB), who replaced Ms. Scarlett Ihau
- Mr. James Pettit, Programme Officer (IPB), who replaced Mr. Vaclovas Semaskevicius
- Ms. Solène Jolly, Associate Legal Officer, Implementation Support Branch
- Mr. Victor Barros Correia, Project Assistant (IPB), who replaced Mr. Aldo Rodriguez
- Ms. Sonja Pecak, Project Assistance, Assistance and Protection Branch, who replaced Ms. Olesea Becu.
- Recruitment processes are underway to identify successors for Ms. Chizu Matsuchita, Senior Programme Officer (IPB) and Mr. Shahriar Khateri, Senior Programme Officer (APB).



✚ The Secretariat would like to seize this opportunity to thank outgoing ICA colleagues for their dedicated services and enjoyable camaraderie, and to wish them best of luck in their future endeavors!





Useful links

- OPCW Website: www.opcw.org
- OPCW Africa Programme: <https://www.opcw.org/resources/capacity-building/international-cooperation-programmes/africa-programme>
- OPCW Africa Network: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2411779418947457>

For feedback and questions, please contact:



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