

Statement by Professor Magda Bauta Solés to the 29th
Session of the Conference of the States Parties

The Hague

November 2024

Mr Chairperson, Director-General, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for allowing me to report on ABEO's activities since the Twenty-Eighth Session of the Conference last year. In 2024, the Board has continued to raise awareness of the Convention in all geographical regions and has carried out activities both individually and collectively. This year, the Board met for its Sixteenth and Seventeenth Sessions in April and June, in The Hague. It also briefed the States Parties on its most recent activities and priority areas of work in June.

As per the Board Terms of Reference, membership rotates. The Board expresses its appreciation to former members for their valuable contributions, and looks forward to welcoming new members to the Board and to work collectively to enhance the educational portfolio of the OPCW and raise awareness of the Convention in all regions.

Mr Chairperson,

The OPCW substantially contributes to global peace and security through the effective and comprehensive implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. In the current context, characterized by complexity in multilateral diplomacy, competing priorities on the international agenda, as well as an unprecedented pace in scientific and technological developments, education and outreach constitute essential parts to fulfilling the Convention objectives.

The challenges derived from the above, are accentuated by the rapid pace of scientific and technological developments - Artificial Intelligence included- that represent essential changes to life as we have so far known it. In this regard, the ethical dimension of the impact that artificial intelligence might have on the implementation of the Convention deserves attention. Hence the increased importance of Education and Outreach in the prevention of the re-emergence of chemical weapons cannot be overstated.

Considering the limited resources to sustain and promote Education and Outreach, it is imperative for the ABEO to strive for targeted and effective proposals. Under these circumstances, learning from others' experiences in these fields is essential. The practice accumulated by international organisations, such as the United Nations, the World Health Organisation and the International Atomic Energy Agency, represents a valuable resource to keep the ABEO's advice and proposals relevant.

Bearing this in mind, the ABEO has strived to develop meaningful proposals on Education and Outreach, not only pondering the aforementioned international context, but also focusing on the need for viability and sustainability of the projects it submits for consideration.

Recent ABEO activities and proposals, include, inter alia:

- Bearing in mind the completion of destruction of all declared chemical weapons and the potential offered by the ChemTech Centre, the Board has updated its Strategic Plan to align its priorities with the strategic priorities of the Organisation.
- The first exchange of views by the Board on AI and its impact on Education and Outreach took place on 5 September 2024. Being a crucial matter, AI and its developments will continue to be on the Board's agenda for future recommendations on Education and Outreach. On the proposal of ABEO's Chair and upon approval by the Board, recommending the elaboration of Ethical Guidelines for the use of AI in the fields of Chemistry and Chemistry Education will be a priority area of focus for the Board.
- The initial version of an inventory of universities, providing education on the CWC and related matters, has been prepared by members of the Board who have provided their advice based on their areas of expertise. The inventory, that covers universities in all regional groups, will serve as a reference and an incentive for other States Parties' universities to bolster joint efforts in CWC Education and foster

potential bilateral cooperation. The inventory will be updated as appropriate to stay abreast of relevant education opportunities and will provide a regional perspective of CWC Education.

- Related to the above, a “core syllabus” has been developed to support academic institutions and professors wishing to develop courses on the Convention and, in more broadly sense, for those interested in learning about the CWC and its implementation. The core syllabus includes links to facilitate access to substantive updated content, among others, the OPCW online modules that are available on its Learning Management System and other resources.
- A proposal for further development and implementation of a “Blue Book” for the Centre of Chemistry and Technology has been submitted. This Blue Book will list recognized and prominent experts in the field of Chemistry who, together with the ChemTech Centre, will promote the implementation and objectives of the Convention.
- The Board has identified the implementation of a Model Convention as an outstanding tool to reach out to youth. At its last Sessions, the Board exchanged views with several experts in Model UN implementation and decided to recommend this simulation exercise to engage youth with the CWC and chemical disarmament.

In addition, the ABEO has continued to collaborate, upon request, with different divisions of the Technical Secretariat such as the International Cooperation and Assistance Division for capacity-building and youth events.

We look forward to continuing our collaboration through it, reaching out to National Authorities on issues related to the ABEO's mandate.

Mr Chairperson, distinguished delegates,

The challenges facing our work may be difficult, but not impossible. I am confident in sharing ABEO's willingness to fulfill its mandate in the best interest of all.