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NOTE BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

STATUS OF THE OPCW'S CONTRIBUTION TO GLOBAL ANTI-TERRORISM EFFORTS

INTRODUCTION

1. As decided by the Executive Council (the Council) in paragraph 12.4 of the report of its Sixtieth Session (EC-60/3, dated 22 April 2010), and consistent with the Council's request contained in paragraph 16 of its decision entitled "Addressing the Threat Posed by the Use of Chemical Weapons by Non-State Actors" (EC-86/DEC.9, dated 13 October 2017), the Director-General hereby submits for the Council's consideration at its 111th Session this annual Note to keep the Council informed about the OPCW's contribution to global anti-terrorism efforts, as well as its efforts in implementing the aforementioned decision.
2. The activities of the Technical Secretariat (the Secretariat) summarised in this Note, covering the period from 5 February 2025 to 4 February 2026, have continued to be based on the approach outlined in the decision by the Council at its Twenty-Seventh Session entitled "The OPCW's Contribution to Global Anti-Terrorist Efforts", namely, that "the full and effective implementation of all provisions of the Convention is in itself a contribution to global anti-terrorist efforts" (paragraph 1 of EC-XXVII/DEC.5, dated 7 December 2001).
3. Furthermore, in paragraph 1 of decision EC-86/DEC.9, the Council underscored the "role of the Organisation within its mandate with respect to preventing and responding to the threat posed by the use of chemical weapons by non-State actors to the object and purpose of the Convention" and, in doing so, provided additional impetus for the Secretariat's activities.
4. Decision EC-86/DEC.9 also recognised the important role of assistance and cooperation in support of capacity building to achieve full and effective national implementation, and in assisting States Parties in investigating and prosecuting non-State actors for crimes related to the Chemical Weapons Convention (the Convention), or in countering terrorism as it relates to chemical weapons (paragraphs 9 and 11 of EC-86/DEC.9). The Secretariat will continue to examine and implement cooperation and assistance for States Parties in this regard.
5. The Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism (OEWG-T) remains the primary platform for the States Parties to interact with international experts and to exchange their views on the challenges posed by chemical terrorism, as well as on ways the OPCW can further address this subject through the full and effective implementation of the Convention. In 2025, the Secretariat supported the convening of three OEWG-T meetings.



THE OPCW'S SUPPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL COUNTERTERRORISM COOPERATION

6. In 2025, the OPCW continued its active participation in the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, to which it became a signatory in 2018, and the Compact's Working Group on Emerging Threats and Critical Infrastructure Protection. The OPCW acted as vice-chair of the Working Group alongside the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), under the chairmanship of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL).
7. The Secretariat also engaged with external partners, such as the Group of Experts of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and UNODA, to collaborate in strengthening States Parties' awareness of their relevant obligations, and to offer practical assistance in the areas in which the Convention and resolution 1540 are mutually reinforcing, namely, national legislation, chemical security, and customs and border control. The Secretariat contributed to regional and national workshops aimed at strengthening the implementation of resolution 1540 organised by the above-mentioned stakeholders in Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. In its presentations, the Secretariat underscored the relevant obligations under the Convention that correspond with the resolution.

ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT BY THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT

Situation in the Syrian Arab Republic

8. For more than 11 years, the Secretariat engaged with the Syrian Arab Republic to clarify all gaps, discrepancies, and inconsistencies noted in its initial declaration and subsequent submissions. The Secretariat has consistently reported that the initial declaration was neither accurate nor complete following the verified destruction of the declared Syrian chemical weapons, and has documented numerous incidents of chemical weapons use in the Syrian Arab Republic. The Secretariat issued one report by the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) that identified the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant as the perpetrator of chemical weapons use (S/2255/2024, dated 22 February 2024), and four reports by the IIT that identified the armed forces of the Syrian Arab Republic as perpetrators of chemical weapons use (S/1867/2020, dated 8 April 2020; S/1943/2021, dated 12 April 2021; S/2125/2023, dated 27 January 2023; and S/2478/2026, dated 21 January 2026).
9. Immediately following the transition of power to new Syrian authorities on 8 December 2024, the Secretariat took several actions with a view to obtaining clarifications on the full extent of the Syrian chemical weapons programme and ensuring that the Syrian Arab Republic fulfils its obligations under the Convention, as proliferation or diversion of chemical weapons or related materials to non-State actors remains an acute risk.
10. On 8 February 2025, at the invitation of Syrian caretaker Foreign Minister Asaad Hassan al-Shaibani, the Director-General, accompanied by a high-level delegation from the OPCW that included members of the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria (FFM), and, for the first time, the IIT, visited Damascus to meet with both Syrian interim President Ahmed al-Sharaa and caretaker

Foreign Minister Asaad Hassan al-Shaibani. The aim of the visit was to engage with Syrian experts on the Syrian chemical weapons dossier and brief high-ranking members of the Syrian Government and Syrian experts as needed. Notably, the new Syrian authorities accepted the mandate of the IIT for the first time and committed to cooperation with the Secretariat on all its mandates, including the identification of perpetrators of chemical weapons use. Since the visit of the Director-General, the Secretariat has been coordinating with the Syrian authorities to monitor the status of chemical weapons-related sites and to secure chemical weapons-related locations and materials therein.

11. Throughout 2025, the Secretariat continued to implement its existing mandates in the Syrian Arab Republic. Two deployments to the Syrian Arab Republic in March and April 2025 were conducted under the mandate of the DAT. On 1 June 2025, the Office of Special Missions (OSM) was established to coordinate all of the Secretariat's activities, inter alia, in the Syrian Arab Republic. The coordination and organisation of these activities through the OSM allow the Secretariat to carry out its mandates more efficiently and effectively, including, inter alia, verification of the initial declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic and the destruction of chemical weapons and related materials and equipment, establishment of the facts surrounding the allegations of use of toxic chemicals as weapons, and identification of perpetrators in instances where use or likely use has been established in the Syrian Arab Republic, together with other mandated activities in the Syrian Arab Republic and beyond. The OSM deployed to the Syrian Arab Republic in June, August, and September 2025. In October 2025, the Secretariat re-established a continuous presence of the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic and continues to work on securing accommodation and office space at a designated facility that ensures the integrity and confidentiality of the Secretariat's activities and meets United Nations safety and security standards.
12. From 27 to 29 January 2026, the Secretariat team visited a location in the Aleppo area to assess undeclared storage containers for chemical precursors, and 75 undeclared cylinders that could be declared as chemical weapons. Upon arrival to the Aleppo location, the Secretariat observed that over a dozen of the said large-volume storage containers had been emptied. The following day, the Secretariat team collected eight samples from these containers.
13. Regarding the 75 undeclared cylinders, upon the Secretariat team's arrival at the location, accompanied by the Syrian National Authority, officials from the Syrian National Authority reported that the cylinders were no longer present and that they were not aware of their whereabouts. On 28 January 2026, the Syrian authorities stated that the cylinders had been removed on 24 December 2025 and had reportedly been destroyed at a local scrapyards. The Syrian authorities further informed the Secretariat that they had launched an investigation to determine the fate of the said cylinders.
14. Since March 2025, the Secretariat has visited more than 20 locations, conducted interviews with former chemical weapons experts, and collected 19 samples. In addition to over 6,000 documents collected by the Secretariat from the locations visited, on 15 January 2026 the Syrian authorities handed over to the Secretariat team in Damascus 34 sealed cardboard boxes containing documents. Based on the information gathered through the Secretariat's deployment in 2025, several locations visited by the Secretariat could be declarable under the Convention.

15. The Organisation has continued to provide States Parties with information on the activities carried out by the Secretariat in relation to the current situation vis-à-vis the Syrian authorities and the State's obligations under the Convention, as well as on the additional financial and human resources needed to carry out any future missions in the Syrian Arab Republic. This includes engagement with the Syrian Arab Republic to address chemical weapons proliferation and prevent the re-emergence of chemical weapons, as well as to assist with capacity building for Syrian authorities to ensure long-term compliance with the Convention.

Support to the policymaking process

16. The first meeting of the OEWG-T, on 24 February 2025, featured a presentation by Colonel Günter Povoden, an on-site assistance expert for the Middle East region under the European Union Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence (CoE) initiative. His presentation focused on the CBRN CoE and chemical security. The second meeting, on 3 July 2025, featured a presentation by Ms Alma Pintol, Officer in Charge, Countering Terrorist Use of Weapons Unit, United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism. Her presentation focused on the Office's work to combat terrorist use of weapons, including chemical weapons. At its third meeting, on 1 October 2025, the OEWG-T received a presentation from Mr Zachary Kallenborn, a PhD candidate at King's College London and a Research Associate at the University of Oxford. His presentation focused on uncrewed aerial vehicles (drones) and chemical terrorism, including past cases, current attack scenarios, and emerging trends.

Criminalisation of activities prohibited by the Chemical Weapons Convention

17. The criminalisation of activities prohibited by the Convention, such as developing, stockpiling, producing, and otherwise acquiring chemical weapons, is a key element in preventing the use of chemical weapons by non-State actors. Recognising the potential for both transnational and domestic manifestations of the terrorism threat, penal legislation concerning such activities needs to be in place, and to be effective, in all States Parties.
18. The importance of States Parties' adoption of effective national legislation to criminalise acts prohibited by the Convention, as required by Article VII, has been highlighted by OEWG-T discussions, and also prominently reflected in paragraphs 5 and 6 of decision EC-86/DEC.9.
19. Currently, 131 of 193 States Parties have reported having enacted legislation covering all initial measures. However, there remains a significant global legal gap, as 36 States Parties have reported having legislation covering only some of the initial measures, while 26 States Parties either have not submitted information on the adoption of national implementing legislation, or have reported that legislation has yet to be adopted.
20. During the reporting period, the Secretariat continued to support States Parties that have yet to adopt national implementing legislation covering all initial measures. The Secretariat reviewed draft legislation submitted by five States Parties: Namibia (April), the Netherlands (December), Sierra Leone (August), Trinidad and Tobago (August), and Uzbekistan (June). Following these reviews, the Secretariat provided detailed comments to assist those States Parties in reviewing their legal frameworks, to ensure alignment with the initial measures required under the Convention, thereby strengthening global non-proliferation efforts.

21. Two regional conferences for States Parties lacking comprehensive Convention implementing legislation were held in 2025, with the first in Windhoek, Namibia, on 28 and 29 April, and the second in Colombo, Sri Lanka, from 9 to 11 December. A total of 53 delegates from 23 Member States participated in Africa and 28 delegates from 14 Member States participated in Asia.
22. The Secretariat held a national legislative review forum with Namibia in Windhoek, Namibia, on 30 April 2025. In advance of the forum, Namibian delegates were provided with the Secretariat's comments on the draft legislation submitted by Namibia to the Secretariat for review. The Secretariat and Namibian delegates then jointly reviewed and discussed the Secretariat's comments and potential gaps and inconsistencies in the draft law.
23. The Secretariat organised the seventh session of the Influential Visitors Programme with the Marshall Islands, from 15 to 17 July 2025. The Programme targets States Parties in the final stages of adopting implementing legislation. The high-level delegation, which included three Members of Parliament, participated in a series of meetings at the OPCW Headquarters to increase their understanding of issues related to the Convention and national responsibilities under it, and received tailored guidance on legislative matters and challenges related to parliamentary approval. The delegation presented a road map on the adoption of their draft bill and committed to follow through on the enactment process upon return to their country. The relevant legislation was adopted in September 2025.
24. The Secretariat continued to contribute to events organised by external partners during the reporting period. Secretariat staff made a virtual presentation on national implementation of the Convention and synergies between the Convention and United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 during a national workshop to elaborate the Cambodian resolution 1540 national action plan, organised by UNODA in April 2025. Secretariat staff also made a virtual presentation during a CBRN criminalisation workshop for Ukraine organised by UNICRI in February 2025.
25. In September 2025, Secretariat staff made online presentations on the national implementation of the Convention and on synergies between the Convention and United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 during a workshop for the national action plan of Panama, organised by the Secretariat of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism of the Organization of American States, in cooperation with the Export Control and Related Border Security Program of the Department of State of the United States of America.
26. Secretariat staff also made virtual presentations on the Convention and the work of the OPCW as part of the Disarmament Toolkit 2025, organised by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific in collaboration with Chaitanya–The Policy Consultancy. Secretariat staff virtually participated in the Annual National Round Table on the Coordination of the Implementation of the 1540 Committee held in Kyrgyzstan, organised by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Programme Office in Bishkek with the support of the Kyrgyz Ministry of Economy and Commerce.

27. In November, Secretariat staff made virtual presentations during two CBRN criminalisation workshops for Bosnia and Herzegovina and the United Arab Emirates, organised by UNICRI, and during an awareness-raising workshop on United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 and dual-use goods in Sri Lanka, organised by UNODA and the European Union Partner-to-Partner Export Control Programme.

Measures to prevent the hostile use of toxic chemicals by non-State actors

28. The enhancement of global chemical security at all stages of the chemical life cycle, throughout for instance the stages of research and development, manufacture, transport, storage, and disposal, continued to serve as a useful framework for considering the OPCW's further contribution to global efforts to prevent chemical terrorism.
29. Furthermore, decision EC-86/DEC.9, which underscores the "obligation of each State Party under paragraph 2 of Article VI of the Convention to 'adopt the necessary measures to ensure that toxic chemicals and their precursors are only developed, produced, otherwise acquired, retained, transferred, or used' for purposes not prohibited under the Convention" (paragraph 4), is not limited to the physical aspects of security throughout the chemical life cycle, but includes the overall management of the life cycle. This management may exist in a national chemical security programme and may include measures such as regulations, policy, and national risk assessments, as deemed necessary by each State Party.
30. The Secretariat continued to advance its global and regional capacity-building activities under the OPCW Chemical Safety and Security Management Programme. In 2025, 37 capacity-building training courses and events under Article XI of the Convention were held, benefiting over 700 participants.
31. Pursuant to paragraph 10 of decision EC-86/DEC.9, which requested the Secretariat "to enhance its capacity-building programmes that facilitate the sharing of chemical safety and security best practices among States Parties", in 2025 the Secretariat organised a series of courses on chemical safety and security, as described below.
32. The Secretariat organised four regional seminars on chemical safety and security management: a virtual seminar on 18 March 2025 for the Africa region; an in-person seminar in Tirana, Albania from 17 to 19 June 2025 for the Eastern Europe region; an in-person seminar in Jakarta, Indonesia from 30 September to 2 October 2025 for the Asia region; and a virtual seminar on 14 October 2025 for the Latin America and Caribbean region. Promoting a chemical safety and security culture helps to prevent the misuse of dangerous substances, thereby aiding global anti-terrorism efforts by reducing the risk of chemical attacks.
33. The Secretariat continued its efforts to help bolster States Parties' capacity in chemical security management and counterterrorism. In this context, the Secretariat organised the second workshop on developing indicative guidelines for "Know Your Customer: Due Diligence on Chemical Products" from 18 to 21 February 2025 in Nairobi, Kenya, where the draft version of the guidelines was agreed to. The draft version has been further reviewed by a wider group of experts nominated by OPCW Member States during a review workshop held online on 18 December 2025. As the third instalment in the chemical safety and security management tools development programme series, the "Know Your Customer" guidelines provide an important toolkit for chemical supply

chain stakeholders to exercise due diligence to ensure that certain substances, such as toxic chemicals or precursors to explosives or drugs, are not sold for illicit purposes. The guidelines target States Parties with limited resources and small and medium-sized enterprises.

34. From 17 to 20 June 2025, the Secretariat and the Government of China co-organised a workshop on artificial intelligence (AI) and chemical safety and security management in Shanghai — the first capacity-building programme dedicated to AI under the OPCW. The workshop provided a platform for States Parties, in particular those with developing and transitioning economies, to learn about the applications of AI for the peaceful use of chemistry, to promote participation of States Parties in global governance on AI, and to contribute to the effective implementation of the Convention. The workshop brought together diverse experts across the AI and chemical industries, as well as representatives from government, academia, the United Nations, and other key stakeholders to examine the growing impact of AI on chemical safety and security, within the framework of the Convention. Additionally, the workshop served as a platform to showcase best practices of the host country and various AI tools.
35. A workshop on general practical aspects of chemical safety and security in laboratories was organised for global participants in Milan, Italy, from 20 to 23 May 2025. The workshop focused on best practices and knowledge about hazardous chemicals and related risk assessments, personal protective equipment, emergency management, environmental impacts, and sustainability.
36. Aspects of chemical safety and security management were also addressed during the Seoul Workshop on the Peaceful Development and Use of Chemistry for Member States in the Asia region, organised jointly with the Republic of Korea, from 28 to 30 October 2025.
37. A second expert meeting on developing a compendium of best practices for a national legislative and regulatory framework on chemical security was held virtually on 10 March 2025, following up on the initial expert meeting held in The Hague in October 2024. The meeting gathered select experts in chemical security from all regional groups in order to further refine the compendium's structure and content, assign drafting responsibilities, and establish a timeline for submissions of contributions and next steps in the development of the compendium.
38. A workshop on strengthening chemical security legislation and its enforcement in Central Asia was conducted in Ankara, Türkiye, on 3 and 4 June 2025. The workshop provided a platform for delegates from National Authorities, law enforcement bodies, prosecution services, and regulatory agencies to examine the legal and practical dimensions of implementing and enforcing the Convention and chemical security legislation. The workshop was organised in partnership with UNICRI and hosted by the Türkiye Disaster and Emergency Management Authority. Twenty-three delegates participated from six States Parties: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Türkiye, and Uzbekistan.
39. Two more workshops on best practices to resolve transfer discrepancies were held in 2025: in Muscat, Oman, on 29 and 30 January, for States Parties from the Middle East and West Asia; and in Mexico City, Mexico, on 27 and 28 May, for States Parties from

Latin America and the Caribbean. The workshops provided a platform for technical experts and peers, including representatives from the World Customs Organization, to exchange views, experiences, challenges, and best practices related to identifying and resolving transfer discrepancies.

40. A workshop for English-speaking African States on preventing illicit transfers of chemicals was held in The Hague, the Netherlands, from 13 to 15 May 2025. The training imparted knowledge and skills related to the detection and identification of Convention-controlled and other toxic chemicals, proven to be useful to prevent and mitigate illegal transfers. The training was held at the OPCW Centre for Chemistry and Technology (ChemTech Centre). Twenty-five participants from nine African States Parties attended.
41. A training course for Pacific island States on preventing illicit transfers of chemicals was held in Brisbane, Australia, from 16 to 18 September 2025. Organised by the Secretariat in cooperation with the Australian Safeguards and Non-Proliferation Office and the Australian Border Force, the course strengthened capacities of customs and National Authority officials to prevent and mitigate illicit transfer of Convention-controlled chemicals, including through trans-shipment operations. The course was attended by 29 participants from 12 Member States.
42. A training-of-trainers course for representatives of customs administrations and National Authorities on technical aspects of the Convention transfers regime was held in Paramaribo, Suriname, from 9 to 11 December 2025. The course equipped national customs training institutions from English-speaking Caribbean Member States with knowledge and skills that can be adapted and disseminated to train customs officers at scale in their respective countries in the enforcement of the Convention. Twenty-five participants from 11 Caribbean Member States attended.
43. Further details on activities carried out specifically under the OPCW Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa on the Chemical Weapons Convention (the Africa Programme) are provided in paragraphs 63 to 77 below.

Ensuring an effective response to the hostile use of toxic chemicals

44. Enhancing global capacity to respond to the hostile use of a toxic chemical has continued to be a priority area for the OPCW. The Secretariat's efforts were aimed at supporting national and regional response capacities, enhancing the capacity of the OPCW to respond and provide assistance, and improving the collective response of the United Nations and other international organisations.
45. In acknowledging decision EC-86/DEC.9, which noted in its final preambular paragraph "the need to continue to enhance the Secretariat's capacity and readiness, in response to alleged incidents of chemical weapons use, to provide technical assistance, to deploy emergency measures of assistance under Article X of the Convention at the request of a State Party, and to enhance the Secretariat's readiness to conduct investigations of alleged use under Article IX and Article X of the Convention and Part XI of the Verification Annex to the Convention", the activities below are highlighted.

46. In line with the report of the Council at its Eighty-Sixth Session (EC-86/11, dated 13 October 2017) and its decision EC-86/DEC.9, as well as the decision of the Conference of the States Parties at its Twenty-Eighth Session on “Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use and the Threat of Future Use” (C-28/DEC.12, dated 30 November 2023), the Secretariat worked to further enhance States Parties’ capacities in 2025. Towards this end, and to support States Parties in building their capacity to investigate incidents involving chemical warfare agents and toxic industrial chemicals, the Secretariat (through the Assistance and Protection Branch) conducted an advanced course in Jacqueville, Côte d’Ivoire, from 4 to 11 April 2025 and, together with the basic course held at the same location from 4 to 8 November 2024, completed the OPCW 2024 – 2025 training cycle on the investigation of chemical incidents for French-speaking Member States in Africa. The Secretariat continued to provide support to States Parties in the development of their national programmes for protective purposes, pursuant to paragraph 4 of Article X of the Convention. The Online Self-Assessment Tool continued to be offered to States Parties to support the development of robust national protection plans at the subregional and national levels, through risk-based needs assessment and a better targeting of areas for capacity-development assistance.
47. Within the scope of assistance under Article X of the Convention, the Secretariat continued to train relevant staff to assist requesting States Parties in the identification of munitions, explosive devices, remnants of war, or improvised devices suspected of containing chemical warfare agents or toxic chemicals that could be used by non-State actors. In 2025, the Secretariat worked to enhance this capacity by maintaining advanced certification in non-destructive testing/evaluation for inspectors and support staff, and by including in the Secretariat’s specialised programme training on improvised explosive devices that could be used by non-State actors to disseminate chemical weapons agents.
48. The Secretariat offered in-person, online, and hybrid activities to States Parties throughout the year, focusing on improving and strengthening relevant capacity-building programmes. Overall in 2025, in partnership with States Parties and partner training centres, 55 assistance and protection-related activities were conducted, benefiting over 1,100 participants from States Parties across all regions in the various training courses aimed at supporting Article X implementation.

Enhancing laboratory capacity at the OPCW and in States Parties

49. The capability to safely analyse a wide range of chemicals and types of samples, both within the Secretariat itself and within each State Party, is of fundamental importance to the full and effective implementation of the Convention. Such capability can take a number of practical forms, ranging from the detection of chemicals in the field with hand-held equipment, such as by customs agencies, to the analysis of samples in a laboratory to identify chemicals used in an attack or to determine the likely provenance of a chemical weapons agent. Forward-looking research and development are also key to making practical advancements, such as in medical countermeasures. Sustainably developing this capability remains a priority for the Organisation, including in the context of the threat posed by non-State actors.

50. From 12 to 16 May 2025, in Athens, Greece, the Secretariat, with a voluntary contribution from Germany and in cooperation with the General Chemical State Laboratory of Greece, organised a course for analytical chemists from laboratories supporting customs services in Africa. The course provided participants with practical knowledge and experience in analysing Convention-related chemicals, thereby enhancing their customs authorities' capacity to detect suspicious shipments of dual-use chemicals that could potentially be used in terrorist attacks.
51. From 11 to 14 November 2025, the Secretariat organised a course for analytical chemists from laboratories supporting customs services at the ChemTech Centre in Pijnacker-Nootdorp, the Netherlands. With in-kind assistance from China in the form of four trainers with expertise in customs and in the analysis of Convention-related chemicals, the course was aimed at assisting qualified analytical chemists in acquiring further experience and practical knowledge of the analysis of Convention-related chemicals.
52. The OPCW Laboratory Twinning and Assistance Programme is aimed at assisting laboratories in States Parties with economies that are either developing or in transition to improve their performance in the OPCW proficiency tests, which must be successfully completed in order to become an OPCW designated laboratory. Assisting laboratories offered their resources, with support from the Secretariat, to implement a series of training and mentorship visits, aiming at enhancing the capacity of assisted laboratories in the analysis of environmental and biomedical samples.
53. In 2025, the Secretariat completed the implementation of the project "Assessing and Enhancing Capacity of Analytical Laboratories from African and GRULAC Member States" through a voluntary contribution from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, aimed at laboratories from the Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean regions that are seeking OPCW designation. The project came to an end on 31 March 2025.
54. Additionally within the area of analysis of Convention-related chemicals, in 2025 the Secretariat supported 21 research projects under the Programme for Support of Research Projects, and the participation of 72 experts (45 online and 27 face to face) in 10 international events under the Conference Support Programme.

The role of the Scientific Advisory Board

55. Through its work in assessing and reporting on developments in scientific and technological fields that are relevant to the Convention, the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) has an important role to play in ensuring that the Secretariat and States Parties are better placed to mitigate the threat posed by the use of chemical weapons by non-State actors. The SAB endeavours to stay abreast of emerging technologies and developments that may be attractive to non-State actors. In April 2025, the SAB held its Thirty-Ninth Session, in which briefings were given by OPCW staff and external experts on topics relating to non-State actors.
56. In his response to the report of the Thirty-Seventh Session of the SAB (EC-104/DG.22, dated 27 September 2023), the Director-General announced his intention to establish a temporary working group (TWG) on chemical forensics, the objective of which would be to review the science and technology relevant to chemical forensics and to identify

remaining gaps and challenges such that the OPCW can make best use of the information chemical forensics can yield moving forward. This TWG has now met five times and is currently finalising its end-of-mandate report, in which it will provide recommendations and advice to the Director-General and the OPCW. The report is expected to be issued by April 2026.

57. In his response to the report of the Thirty-Eighth Session of the SAB (EC-106/DG.19, dated 4 July 2024), the Director-General announced his intention to establish, upon a recommendation from the Board, a TWG on AI, with a one-year mandate. This additional TWG began its mandate in January 2025, meeting three times over the course of the year. It is now preparing its end-of-mandate report, which is expected to be issued by March 2026.

The OPCW Centre for Chemistry and Technology and the network of designated laboratories

58. The ChemTech Centre provides expanded and enhanced analytical, operational, and capacity-building capabilities to assist States Parties to better prepare for and respond to the use and threats of use of chemical weapons by non-State actors. While many of the activities at the ChemTech Centre continue or enhance existing activities, the facility also allows for additional programmes to strengthen the Secretariat's ability to fulfil its mandate more effectively. These relate to the enhancement of the OPCW Laboratory's capabilities, inspectors' routine and non-routine readiness and training, international cooperation and assistance, knowledge management, and scientific collaboration.
59. Since 2024, the OPCW network of partner laboratories that are available for off-site analysis of samples has remained largely stable; there are currently 29 laboratories from 24 States Parties that meet the requisite criteria to be OPCW designated laboratories for the analysis of environmental samples.
60. The OPCW network of partner laboratories currently consists of 19 laboratories from 14 States Parties that have met the requisite criteria to be OPCW designated laboratories for the analysis of biomedical samples.
61. Based on recommendations of the SAB (SAB-37/1, dated 1 September 2023) and its Temporary Working Group on the Analysis of Biotoxins (Annex 2 to SAB-37/1), the OPCW Laboratory organised the First Trial OPCW Biotoxins Proficiency Test, focusing on the low molecular weight toxin saxitoxin. The trial attracted a high level of participation, with 28 laboratories taking part. Samples were prepared at the ChemTech Centre with assistance from the Swedish Defence Research Agency. Guidelines, reporting templates, and the scoring system were harmonised with laboratories participating in the United Nations Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons and with the OPCW designated laboratory network. The test aimed to (a) build additional expertise in the analysis of the two Convention-listed toxins, and (b) further assess the need for an Official OPCW Proficiency Test on Biotoxins. A total of 23 participating laboratories achieved the maximum score. The Second Trial OPCW Biotoxins Proficiency Test, launched in August 2025 and currently ongoing, focuses on ricin and includes 26 participating laboratories.

62. The OPCW Laboratory continues to monitor scientific progress and developments in the field of chemical forensics and is actively pursuing the transfer of methods among the network of laboratories for in-depth evaluation. Such methods will enlarge the toolkit available to the designated laboratories for the analysis of samples and the determination of chemical signatures.

Efforts by the OPCW to enhance chemical security and counterterrorism efforts as part of the OPCW Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa on the Chemical Weapons Convention in 2025

63. Africa continues to face particular challenges from terrorist threats and attacks in several countries. The potential use of chemicals by non-State actors, including terrorist and violent extremist groups, to perpetrate terrorist attacks remains a serious threat. In 2025, the Secretariat continued to devote special attention to Africa through the sixth phase of the Africa Programme (2023 – 2025), with a view to responding to African States Parties' needs and priorities in areas of chemical safety and security as well as development through peaceful applications of chemistry.
64. In terms of preventing and responding to chemical terrorism in Africa, the sixth phase of the Programme continued to follow an integrated approach aimed at enhancing chemical security on the continent. This approach is multidimensional and focuses on developing the capacities of African States Parties in the areas listed below.

Advancing national implementation of the Convention in Africa

65. In 2025, the Secretariat delivered nine national and regional capacity-building activities that supported African National Authorities in the area of national implementation of the Convention. These activities included general and advanced courses as well as the annual meetings of National Authorities. The landmark OPCW conference on advancing implementation of the Convention in Africa, held in April in Windhoek, Namibia, brought together 53 representatives from 23 African States Parties. These platforms enabled African States Parties to exchange experiences, address common Convention implementation challenges, and reinforce coordination between policy, regulatory, and operational stakeholders.
66. Namibia and Sierra Leone benefited from reviews of draft Convention implementing legislation. Namibia and Sao Tome and Principe achieved progress towards covering initial Convention implementation measures. National implementation frameworks were advanced in countries such as Uganda and Zimbabwe. Furthermore, the Mentorship/Partnership Programme between the National Authorities of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (mentor) and Ghana (mentee) continued, while new mentor and mentee roles were approved or were under review for Algeria, Lesotho, Morocco, Namibia, and Uganda.
67. The Secretariat continued to leverage and further develop relevant partnerships to advance the implementation of the Convention in Africa. It collaborated with the African Union Commission to raise awareness among African States Parties on the imperative to adopt comprehensive Convention national implementing legislation. Separately, a memorandum of understanding was signed on 3 June in Lisbon between the OPCW and the Community of Portuguese Language Countries, including African States Parties, to enhance cooperation, notably in the area of national legislation.

Control of cross-border transfers of toxic chemicals

68. During the reporting period, the Secretariat's capacity-building support in the area of control of cross-border transfers of toxic chemicals focused on three aspects: (a) enhancing the capacity of African customs administrations to enforce the Convention's transfers regime for scheduled chemicals; (b) promoting enhanced regional cooperation among African customs administrations, as well as between customs administrations and National Authorities; and (c) building the capacities of laboratories supporting customs services to detect, identify, and analyse Convention-related chemicals.
69. Within this context, the following events have been conducted specifically for the Africa region: a workshop on preventing the illicit transfer of scheduled chemicals for African States Parties, held at the ChemTech Centre in Pijnacker-Nootdorp, the Netherlands, from 13 to 15 May 2025, and a course for analytical chemists from laboratories supporting customs services in the Africa region, held in Athens, Greece, from 12 to 16 May 2025.
70. Furthermore, with in-kind support from China, the Secretariat organised, from 11 to 14 November 2025 at the ChemTech Centre, a course for analytical chemists from laboratories supporting customs services. The course benefited 11 participants from as many Member States, including 4 in Africa.

Advancing chemical safety and security culture, standards, and practices in Africa

71. In 2025, the Secretariat continued to focus on further developing the awareness, knowledge, and capabilities of African States Parties in the areas of chemical safety and security management. Key events organised during the reporting period included a seminar on the Convention and chemical and security management for the Africa region, held online from the ChemTech Centre on 18 March.
72. The Secretariat continued to consult with African experts within the framework of developing global indicative guidelines on safety and security. African experts also took part in the aforementioned workshop on AI and chemical safety and security management, co-organised by the OPCW and the Government of China in Shanghai, from 17 to 20 June.
73. Separately, African participants in 2025 continued to benefit from other capacity-building courses on chemical safety and security offered to global audiences. These included an e-learning safety training programme in English (virtual, 28 April – 27 June); a workshop on the general aspects of chemical safety and security in laboratories (Milan, Italy, 20 – 23 May); the twenty-sixth edition of the Associate Programme (the Netherlands and elsewhere, 28 July – 25 September); and the Executive Programme on Integrated Chemicals Management (Seoul, the Republic of Korea, 16 – 18 December).

Enhancing protection and response capabilities against chemical incidents and attacks

74. In 2025, 334 African participants benefited from 23 regional and international capacity-building activities aimed at developing capacities in areas of assistance and protection. Topics covered in these courses, organised in collaboration with international partners, included detection and handling procedures in incidents involving toxic chemicals; decontamination of chemical warfare agents and toxic

industrial chemicals; sampling and analysis in a highly contaminated environment; improving hospital preparedness for large-scale chemical emergencies; and investigation by law enforcement agencies of chemical incidents and attacks. Several of these events were offered specifically to the Africa region.

Strengthening and developing chemical laboratory competencies and infrastructure

75. In the period under review, 76 African chemists benefited from 10 regional and global analytical skills development courses. The courses included the annual analytical skills development course for African Member States, held in May in Pretoria, South Africa, in partnership with the South African Protechnik Laboratories. In addition, specialised OPCW proficiency test training continued to be provided to two laboratories from Kenya and Nigeria under a project funded by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland until 31 March 2025. Furthermore, under the OPCW Laboratory Twinning and Assistance Programme, two twinning projects—between laboratories in the Netherlands and South Africa and laboratories in Morocco and the United States of America—have been ongoing.
76. Separately, in cooperation with the National Institute of Criminalistics and Criminology of the National Gendarmerie, with support from the National Authority of Algeria, the Secretariat organised the second edition of the training course on the maintenance of laboratory equipment for Member States in the Africa region, in Algiers, Algeria, from 7 to 11 December. The course assisted qualified personnel in acquiring the experience and practical knowledge needed to develop their capacity to perform basic preventive and curative maintenance of laboratory equipment, and to facilitate the adoption of good practices in the area of preventive maintenance of equipment in analytical chemistry laboratories.
77. In 2025, under the Equipment Exchange Programme, the Secretariat initiated the transfer of laboratory equipment from Germany to Tunisia.