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10 March 2026
ENGLISH only

NOTE BY THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT**CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR AN INTEGRATED ADVANCED COURSE
AND EXERCISE ON ASSISTANCE AND PROTECTION
FOR ENGLISH-SPEAKING STATES PARTIES IN AFRICA
PRETORIA, SOUTH AFRICA
1 – 9 SEPTEMBER 2026**

1. The Technical Secretariat of the OPCW (the Secretariat) wishes to invite English-speaking States Parties in Africa to nominate representatives to participate in an integrated advanced course and exercise related to assistance and protection under Article X of the Chemical Weapons Convention (the Convention), which will begin with an online course on the essentials of responding to chemical incidents.
2. The integrated advanced course and exercise under Article X of the Convention is being organised by the Secretariat in conjunction with the Government of South Africa and the South African Council for the Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction. In order to strengthen the capacities of States Parties, the course will provide training for up to 25 sponsored participants in the essentials of assistance and protection, with a focus on responding to incidents involving chemical warfare agents and toxic industrial chemicals.
3. The course will be divided into the following segments:
 - (a) an online essential course, from 9 May to 9 June 2026;
 - (b) a hands-on integrated advanced course and exercise, from 1 to 9 September 2026, in Pretoria, South Africa; and
 - (c) a one-day follow-up webinar in late 2026 (December, exact date to be determined).
4. The online essential course will begin with basic theoretical knowledge about the OPCW, the Convention, chemical warfare agents, toxic industrial chemicals, the physico-chemical properties of chemicals, personal protective equipment (PPE), decontamination, detection, identification, and monitoring, the Emergency Response Guidebook, the CAMEO Chemicals database, and the Incident Command System. It will prepare participants for success in the next training segment by addressing certain technical aspects that will be of use to them in chemical emergency response. Up to 35 participants may be selected to participate in the online course, but only 25 participants will be invited to continue with the subsequent hands-on training.



5. The hands-on integrated advanced course and exercise will consist of a combination of theory-based lectures, equipment demonstrations, and practical training sessions and exercises. It will also explore a variety of complex scenarios in combination with the final exercise, which will serve as an opportunity to practise and reinforce the knowledge and skills acquired in the course.
6. The target audience for the course is chiefly personnel from front-line chemical emergency response units within official civilian or military institutions. Participants should be physically fit and able to wear PPE during the practical sessions of the course under hot, humid, tiring, and stressful conditions. A medical certificate may be required to attend the hands-on training segment.
7. Applications must be submitted online via Eventus, the OPCW event management system (<https://eventus.opcw.org>), **no later than 9 April 2026**. Candidates must attach their curriculum vitae and a copy of their valid passport to their application.
8. Endorsement by a candidate's respective National Authority is a prerequisite to being considered in the selection process. The endorsement process must be completed online through Eventus **no later than 9 April 2026**. The Secretariat strongly encourages States Parties and National Authorities to seek, support, and endorse applications from qualified women candidates.
9. Participants should take the necessary steps to ensure their participation in the entire cycle by obtaining the required clearances from the relevant authorities based on the invitation letter issued by the Secretariat.
10. The Secretariat expects to be able to sponsor a maximum of 25 participants for the hands-on training. For sponsored participants, the Secretariat will cover the costs of travel, accommodation, airport transfers, medical insurance, and lunches, and will provide a limited subsistence allowance to cover sundry expenses.
11. The Secretariat will seek the most economical options when making travel arrangements for sponsored participants. Participants are expected to arrive in South Africa for the hands-on training **no earlier than 31 August 2026**, and to depart **no later than 10 September 2026**. The Secretariat will not cover expenses unrelated to the course or resulting from unauthorised travel arrangement changes. Once the Secretariat has purchased their tickets, sponsored participants will be responsible for ensuring that they participate in the course. In case of any unforeseen circumstances, participants should immediately contact the substantive officers responsible for the course.
12. The integrated advanced course and exercise will be conducted in English; therefore, participants are required to have a good working knowledge of written and spoken English. No interpretation services will be provided during any segment of the training.
13. Participants are requested to obtain all necessary visas (including transit visas) before traveling to South Africa. Further details regarding logistics and the final programmes will be issued to participants at a later stage.

14. The provisional programmes for the integrated advanced course and exercise are included as the annexes to this Note, and further details will be issued at a later date. Any questions may be addressed to the focal points for this training cycle in the Assistance and Protection Branch of the International Cooperation and Assistance Division of the Secretariat: Mr Babatunde Olowookere (Tel.: +31(0)65 327 4684; Email: babatunde.olwookere@opcw.org) and Ms Aureliarita Marcellus (Tel.: +31 (0)70 416 3483; Email: aureliarita.marcellus@opcw.org).

Annexes:

Annex 1: Online Essentials Course, 9 May – 9 June 2026 – Provisional Programme

Annex 2: Hands-on Integrated Advanced Course and Exercise on Assistance and Protection, Pretoria, South Africa, 1 – 9 September 2026 – Provisional Programme

Annex 1

ONLINE ESSENTIALS COURSE

9 MAY – 9 JUNE 2026

PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME

Chapter 1: The Chemical Weapons Convention

- 1.1. Historical review
- 1.2. The Chemical Weapons Convention
- 1.3. The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)
- 1.4. Article X of the Chemical Weapons Convention

Chapter 2: Technical aspects to respond to emergencies with toxic chemicals

- 2.1. Physical and chemical properties of substances
- 2.2. Toxicological values applied to the management of emergencies with chemicals
- 2.3. Dispersion of contaminants in the environment after an event with chemicals
- 2.4. Safety distances and planning zones

Chapter 3: Introduction to chemical agents

- 3.1. Chemical weapons
- 3.2. Chemical warfare agents
- 3.3. Exposure to chemical warfare agents
- 3.4. Toxic industrial chemicals

Chapter 4: Introduction to personal protective equipment

- 4.1. Chemical protection suits
- 4.2. Respiratory protection
- 4.3. OPCW protection levels

Chapter 5: Introduction to decontamination

- 5.1. Decontamination overview
- 5.2. Decontamination stations and corridors
- 5.3. Decontamination processes
- 5.4. Decontamination systems

Chapter 6: Introduction to detection and identification

- 6.1. Recognition
- 6.2. Detection
- 6.3. Identification

Chapter 7: The Emergency Response Guidebook

- 7.1. Introduction
- 7.2. The yellow section
- 7.3. The blue section
- 7.4. Operational guides (the orange section)
- 7.5. The green section

Chapter 8: The CAMEO Chemicals database

- 8.1. Overview
- 8.2. Searching for chemicals
- 8.3. Searching for chemicals by name
- 8.4. Searching for chemicals by United Nations number
- 8.5. Chemical reactivity

Chapter 9: The Incident Command System

- 9.1. History of the ICS
- 9.2. ICS definitions
- 9.3. Structure and functions
- 9.4. Steps to be followed by the first responder with operational capacity
- 9.5. How the population can be protected during a chemical incident

Annex 2

**HANDS-ON INTEGRATED ADVANCED COURSE AND EXERCISE
ON ASSISTANCE AND PROTECTION
PRETORIA, SOUTH AFRICA
1 – 9 SEPTEMBER 2026**

PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME

Time	Activity
<i>Monday, 31 August 2026</i>	
	Arrival of participants
<i>Tuesday, 1 September 2026 – ESSENTIALS OVERVIEW</i>	
09:00 – 10:00	Welcome remarks
10:00 – 10:15	Group photo
10:15 – 10:30	<i>Break</i>
10:30 – 11:00	Presentation: The Chemical Weapons Convention, the OPCW, and Article X of the Convention
11:00 – 11:30	Stakeholder presentation by the National Authority of South Africa
11:30 – 12:30	Presentation: Chemical warfare agents and toxic industrial chemicals
12:30 – 13:30	<i>Lunch</i>
13:30 – 14:30	Presentation: Physico-chemical properties and their application in incident management
14:30 – 14:45	<i>Break</i>
14:45 – 16:45	Practical session: Physico-chemical properties and their application in incident management
16:45 – 17:00	Daily summary
<i>Wednesday, 2 September 2026 – PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT</i>	
09:00 – 10:00	Presentation: PPE – Respiratory protection (review)
10:00 – 10:30	<i>Break</i>
10:30 – 11:30	Presentation: PPE – Chemical suits (review)
11:30 – 12:30	Presentation: Equipment delivery and familiarisation (practice)
12:30 – 13:30	<i>Lunch</i>
13:30 – 16:30	Practical session: PPE (rotation of 3 groups)
16:30 – 16:45	<i>Break</i>
16:45 – 17:00	Daily summary
<i>Thursday, 3 September 2026 – DECONTAMINATION</i>	
09:00 – 10:00	Presentation: Decontamination principles (review)
10:00 – 11:00	Presentation: Decontamination methodology, techniques, and procedures (review)
11:00 – 11:30	<i>Break</i>
11:30 – 12:30	Presentation: Familiarisation with decontamination equipment (practice)
12:30 – 13:30	<i>Lunch</i>
13:30 – 15:00	Practical session: Dry/wet decontamination for operators (rotation of 2 groups)
15:00 – 16:30	Practical session: Victim/mass decontamination (rotation of 2 groups)
16:30 – 16:45	<i>Break</i>
16:45 – 17:00	Daily summary

Time	Activity
Friday, 4 September 2026 – DETECTION AND SAMPLING	
09:00 – 10:00	Presentation: Detection and identification (review)
10:00 – 11:00	Presentation: Introduction to sampling
11:00 – 11:30	<i>Break</i>
11:30 – 12:30	Presentation: Detection and identification (practice)
12:30 – 13:30	<i>Lunch</i>
13:30 – 16:30	Practical session: Sampling (rotation of 3 groups)
16:30 – 16:45	<i>Break</i>
16:45 – 17:00	Daily summary
Saturday, 5 September 2026 – INCIDENT COMMAND AND EXERCISES	
09:00 – 10:00	Presentation: The Incident Command System (review)
10:00 – 11:00	Presentation: The Emergency Response Guide (ERG) (review)
11:00 – 11:30	<i>Break</i>
11:30 – 12:30	Practical session: The ERG
12:30 – 13:30	<i>Lunch</i>
13:30 – 16:45	Practical session: Exercise scenarios 1 and 2 (rotation of 2 groups with break)
16:45 – 17:00	Daily summary
Monday, 7 September 2026 – INCIDENT COMMAND AND EXERCISES (cont.)	
09:00 – 10:00	Presentation: Initial care of victims on the ground
10:00 – 10:15	<i>Break</i>
10:15 – 10:30	Pre-session briefing
10:30 – 12:30	Practical session: Rescue operations in contaminated environments with PPE (rotation of 2 groups)
12:30 – 13:30	<i>Lunch</i>
13:30 – 13:45	Pre-session briefing
13:45 – 16:00	Practical session: Exercise scenarios 3 and 4 (rotation of 2 groups)
16:00 – 16:15	<i>Break</i>
16:15 – 16:30	Daily summary
Tuesday, 8 September 2026 – COMPLEX EXERCISE SCENARIO 5	
09:00 – 09:30	Pre-session briefing
09:30 – 12:00	Practical session: Complex exercise scenario 5 (rotation of 2 groups)
12:00 – 12:15	<i>Lunch</i>
12:15 – 15:30	Practical session: Complex exercise scenario 5 (cont.)
15:30 – 16:00	Debrief of the exercise & preparation for the final exercise
Wednesday, 9 September 2026 – FINAL EXERCISE	
09:00 – 09:30	Pre-session briefing
09:30 – 12:00	Final field exercise (Full PPE)
12:00 – 12:15	<i>Break</i>
12:15 – 13:15	After-action lessons learned, course evaluation, and feedback
13:15 – 14:30	Equipment check, cleaning, and handover
14:30 – 15:30	Concluding remarks
15:30 – 16:30	<i>Lunch</i>
16:30	End of course