



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Twenty-First Session
28 November – 2 December 2016

C-21/DG.17
28 November 2016
Original: ENGLISH

NOTE BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

**OPENING STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL
TO THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES
AT ITS TWENTY-FIRST SESSION**

Mr Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Distinguished colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,

1. I welcome all delegations to the Twenty-First Session of the Conference of the States Parties.
2. First of all, I wish to congratulate Ambassador Christoph Israng, Permanent Representative of Germany, on his election as the Chairperson of the Conference. I am sure that his extensive diplomatic experience and knowledge about the work of the OPCW will enable him to guide this session to a successful conclusion. I also wish to thank our outgoing Chairperson, Ambassador Eduardo Ibarrola-Nicolín of Mexico, who has carried out his responsibilities with skill and distinction.
3. I would also like to acknowledge Ambassador Odette Melono, Permanent Representative of Cameroon, for the able guidance she has provided as Chairperson of the Executive Council. I likewise express my appreciation to her predecessor, Ambassador Francesco Azzarello of Italy.
4. I wish to extend a warm welcome to Mr Kim Won-soo, Under Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, who will deliver a message to the Conference on behalf of the United Nations Secretary-General, H.E. Mr Ban Ki-moon.
5. In keeping with the trend of the last few years, 2016 has been both productive and challenging.
6. Soon after the Twentieth Session of the Conference, in 2015, the last of the declared chemical weapons from the Syrian Arab Republic were destroyed at a commercial disposal facility. This concluded a key part of the mission assigned to the OPCW in the Syrian Arab Republic.
7. The Secretariat has verified the destruction of 24 of the 27 chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) declared by the Syrian Arab Republic. However, the



poor security situation continues to preclude safe access to destroy the remaining aircraft hangar, which stands ready for the emplacement of the explosive charges, and for the Secretariat to visit and confirm the condition of the two stationary above-ground facilities.

8. As part of the annual verification activities, this month representatives of the Secretariat visited the five destroyed underground structures to verify the integrity of the interior plugs. In order to ensure the necessary support for our work, the contract with the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) has been extended until the end of May 2017.
9. While work will continue to fully implement the mandate for the elimination of the Syrian Arab Republic's chemical weapons programme, we are faced with an extraordinary situation. The use of chemical weapons in Syria has been reconfirmed by the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM).
10. The Executive Council adopted at its last session a decision expressing grave concern with the findings of the third and fourth reports of the JIM and condemning in the strongest possible terms the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. The Security Council has extended the mandate of the JIM for another year.
11. States Parties have repeatedly stressed that the use of chemical weapons by anyone under any circumstances is reprehensible and completely contrary to the legal norms established by the international community. Use of chemical weapons is a negation of the fundamental norms of the Convention, which are now regarded as universal. It is a situation that demands a redoubling of our efforts to strengthen the prohibition and to reinforce prevention.
12. The Executive Council's decision (EC-83/DEC.5, dated 11 November 2016) was adopted on 11 November by a roll call vote and a variety of views were expressed. Our Organisation is regarded as one of the most successful international bodies, primarily because of the spirit of cooperation and consensus that it has consistently exhibited. As history will judge this moment, it is my hope that we will continue to work together to uphold the norms of the Convention. We must endeavour to remain on that path. Therefore, I invite all States Parties to contribute to this.
13. There have been further allegations of the use of toxic chemicals as weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, including those attributed to non-State actors, over which I have expressed my serious concerns. The OPCW Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) will continue its work and will endeavour to establish the facts surrounding all credible allegations of chemical weapons use. The Secretariat, through its briefings, has kept States Parties informed about the activities of the FFM. Here I wish to recall that the Executive Council has called upon States Parties to provide the Director-General with any relevant information with respect to past or future allegations of use of chemical weapons within the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic.
14. In 2016, the Secretariat continued its engagement with the Syrian Arab Republic in order to resolve all remaining outstanding issues identified in relation to its initial declaration and related submissions. Throughout this process, the lines of communication have remained open between the Director-General and the Vice Foreign Minister of the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as at the technical level.

15. The Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) deployed to the Syrian Arab Republic twice—in January and in February 2016—to hold technical discussions with experts from the Syrian National Authority, conduct site visits, and collect samples for further analysis in OPCW designated laboratories.
16. At the request of the Executive Council, I convened two rounds of consultations between the Secretariat and Syria at OPCW Headquarters from 27 to 30 April and from 20 to 22 June 2016. I also dispatched a team of experts from the Secretariat to Damascus for technical discussions between 30 May and 3 June. My report reflecting the results of the engagement with the Syrian authorities was circulated during the Eighty-Second Session of the Council (EC-82/HP/DG.2*, dated 30 June 2016) and was also attached to the monthly report that I send to the United Nations Secretary-General. A full, more technical analysis of all outstanding issues was included in two other reports on the work of the DAT (EC-81/HP/DG.1, dated 22 February 2016, and EC-82/HP/DG.3, dated 4 July 2016).
17. The Syrian authorities provided additional information on some outstanding items. This information constitutes updates to the relevant parts of the declaration submitted by Syria. However, it does not entirely resolve all identified gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies. Thus, the Secretariat cannot fully verify that Syria has submitted a declaration that can be considered accurate and complete in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention or the Council's decision adopted on 27 September 2013.
18. I have underscored the need for the provision of original documentation regarding the Syrian chemical weapons programme, access to officials with overarching knowledge about the programme, and scientifically and technically plausible explanations concerning outstanding issues.
19. I have also urged the Syrian Arab Republic to declare all relevant parts of the Syrian Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC) under Articles III and VI of the Convention. In accordance with the decision adopted by the Executive Council at its last session earlier this month (EC-83/DEC.5), the Secretariat is required to conduct additional inspections. These will cover the Barzah and Jamrayah SSRC facilities twice a year and, when security conditions so permit, the relevant sites identified in the third and fourth reports of the JIM.
20. I wish to take this opportunity to thank the States Parties, as well as the European Union, which have contributed generously to the trust fund for our operations in Syria and I hope that such crucial support will continue, especially in view of the recent decision by the Executive Council.
21. At the request of the Government of Iraq, which had shared with the Secretariat information regarding alleged chemical weapons attacks, a number of technical-assistance visits (TAVs) were undertaken in Iraq. The TAV teams met with relevant authorities, collected samples, and conducted interviews with victims and medical doctors. The results of the findings were issued by Iraq and the Secretariat shared them with States Parties. These results confirmed the use of sulfur mustard in northern Iraq by a non-State actor. The incident is to be strongly condemned. It also

underscores the imperative need for determined efforts in the area of countering chemical terrorism.

22. Another major undertaking this year was the removal of the remaining Category 2 chemical weapons from Libya for destruction outside its territory. This followed the decision of the Council of 20 July (EC-M-52/DEC.1, dated 20 July 2016), which was endorsed by the United Nations Security Council in its resolution 2298 (2016). On 26 August, the Council approved the “Plan for the Destruction of Libya’s Remaining Category 2 Chemical Weapons Outside the Territory of Libya” (EC-M-53/DEC.1, dated 26 August 2016), which I had presented in accordance with the Council’s request made on 27 July. By 27 August, which was five weeks after the original decision in July, all chemical weapons had been removed from Libya and on 6 September they arrived at the port of Bremen in Germany. The consignment of 23 tanks was verified by the Technical Secretariat as well as the Libyan National Authority, which I wish to commend for its role in making this mission successful.
23. Destruction operations are currently under way at the designated facility in Munster, Germany, namely GEKA mbH.¹ This mission was by no means routine. The Danish maritime effort was courageous and praiseworthy, given the volatility of the situation. I also wish to acknowledge the generous assistance provided by a number of States Parties to ensure the success of the mission; it bears further testimony to the willingness of States Parties to take actions they deem necessary to preserve the goals of the Chemical Weapons Convention. This mission emerged as an unexpected challenge. Flexibility and adaptability enabled us to conduct it successfully. This is indeed a positive sign for the Organisation as we prepare for future challenges through a review of priorities.
24. In relation to overall progress on destruction, as at 31 October, the Technical Secretariat had verified the destruction of over 66,000 metric tonnes (MTs), or nearly 94% of all declared Category 1 chemical weapons stockpiles. The pace of destruction has remained steady, with an increase of 16% over the past five years.
25. The United States of America began destruction operations at the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (PCAPP). Construction and systemisation of the destruction facility at the Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (BGCAPP) are under way. The Russian Federation has continued destruction operations at the Kizner chemical weapons destruction facility (CWDF) and is expected to complete the destruction by December 2020. A delegation from the Executive Council visited Kizner in April this year.
26. China and Japan have continued to work together on abandoned chemical weapons (ACW) recovery and destruction operations at Haerbaling and at six other locations. Tripartite talks continue to be held with the participation of the Secretariat.
27. The Secretariat will soon complete the 241 inspections planned for this year under Article VI of the Convention. The cooperation that States Parties extend to this important facet of the Convention’s verification regime ensures its value as a major

¹

GEKA mbH = Gesellschaft zur Entsorgung von chemischen Kampfstoffen und Rüstungsaltslasten mbH.

confidence-building measure. Since the entry into force of the Convention, there have been nearly 3,400 such inspections.

28. The significant progress with the Secure Information Exchange (SIX) system has continued in 2016. Thirty-seven States Parties are now using it for the transmission of declaration-related documents. During the meetings of the representatives of the States Parties, the users of the SIX system underlined the improvements the system has brought in terms of saving time and introducing efficiencies. The Secretariat will continue to expand the use of this system and I encourage States Parties to consider utilising this facility.
29. In 2016, the Technical Secretariat enhanced its current planning and operational responsiveness by assigning a number of its inspectors to a new Capacity-Building and Contingency-Planning Cell in the Inspectorate Division. Members of this cell have multidisciplinary backgrounds and provide increased support to contingency planning, as well as to capacity building-related activities that form part of our international cooperation and assistance programmes.
30. In 2016, the Technical Secretariat has continued to provide assistance and deliver capacity-building programmes in support of States Parties' efforts for the effective implementation of the Convention. The Secretariat has conducted some 131 activities and programmes for approximately 1,500 participants in all five regional groups represented in the OPCW.
31. The total operational cost of the international cooperation and assistance programmes is close to EUR 5 million. In addition to the regular budget, these activities were supported by financial and in-kind voluntary contributions. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the European Union and to States Parties that supported international cooperation and assistance programmes.
32. The current phase of the OPCW Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa on the Chemical Weapons Convention (the Africa Programme) will end this year. A new programme has been approved, which will be carried out from 2017 to 2019.
33. To initiate this new cycle, the Secretariat has engaged with States Parties with a view to conducting a needs assessment. This will help in prioritising and tailoring assistance to African States Parties at the national, subregional, and regional levels.
34. As part of the Secretariat's efforts to fulfil its role in providing emergency measures of assistance to States Parties, the Secretariat has established a Rapid Response and Assistance Mission (RRAM) that can be deployed at short notice to assist States Parties affected by an incident of alleged use of toxic chemicals by a non-State actor.
35. Promoting effective national implementation of the Convention remains a salient part of our interaction with States Parties. It is my hope that, through the programmes in this area, we will be able to further enhance the implementation of the Convention at all levels. This enhances our ability to maintain our expertise, capacity, and resources and the durability of the Convention regime well into the future.

36. Our cooperation with the World Customs Organization (WCO) continues to gain strength. I will soon sign a memorandum of understanding between the OPCW and the WCO, which was approved last month by the Executive Council.
37. I am encouraged that States Parties, their experts, and key stakeholders such as the chemical industry, have remained actively engaged in the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism, chaired by Ambassador Joe Tony Aidoo of Ghana, and in its Sub-Working Group on Non-State Actors, facilitated by Ambassador María Teresa Infante of Chile. Since last year, both forums have highlighted a number of areas in which we can work productively to advance the Organisation's contribution to States Parties' counter-terrorism efforts. The full and effective implementation of the Convention by all States Parties constitutes a means of significantly reducing the threat of terrorism. The OPCW can also meaningfully contribute towards enhancing global chemical security in all stages of the chemical life cycle. The Technical Secretariat will fully support both groups in their respective deliberations and in their efforts towards tangible results.
38. In the context of the issue of terrorism involving chemical weapons, the Executive Council, in its decision of 11 November 2016 (EC-83/DEC.5) recalled the words of the Ieper Declaration, adopted on 21 April 2015, in which States Parties expressed, inter alia, their "strong conviction that those responsible for the use of chemical weapons should be held accountable", and underscored "their commitment to ensuring that non-State actors do not obtain chemical weapons or their means of delivery".
39. The Secretariat's cooperation with the United Nations and other international organisations has also continued, including the OPCW's long-standing relationship with the United Nations Security Council 1540 Committee and its Group of Experts. The Secretariat co-chairs the Working Group on Preventing and Responding to WMD² Terrorist Attacks in the framework of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force. The group's project to establish inter-agency interoperability and communications in the event of a chemical or biological attack was initiated by the OPCW. With funding from Canada's WMD Threat Reduction Program, preparations are under way to conduct a table-top exercise in early 2017 at OPCW Headquarters, involving a number of key agencies. The aim of the exercise is to strengthen the capability of the OPCW's RRAM to effectively operate with these agencies.
40. The Open-Ended Working Group on the Future Priorities of the OPCW was established by the Council at its Eighty-Second Session, following a request by the Conference at its Twentieth Session last December (C-20/5, dated 4 December 2015). The working group held two meetings in 2016, at the end of September and in mid-November, under the able guidance of its two co-Chairpersons, Ambassador Nölke of Canada and Ambassador Koloane of South Africa.
41. I welcome the active participation in this working group by many States Parties. The establishment of this forum signals the general recognition that our Organisation

²

WMD = weapon(s) of mass destruction.

needs to be prepared for future challenges. A programme and methods of work for the working group have been formulated and a general exchange on the Organisation's future has taken place. The stage is thus set to take up important and substantive areas of the Organisation's work. The outcome of the deliberations of the working group could form important inputs for the Fourth Review Conference³ in 2018.

42. The Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) held its Twenty-Third and Twenty-Fourth Sessions in April and October of this year. Workshops on scientific developments in chemical forensics and the understanding of mechanisms of action of chemical agents were also held in Helsinki and Paris. These workshops in support of the SAB's report to the Fourth Review Conference were organised in partnership with VERIFIN⁴ in June and the *Secrétariat général de la défense et de la sécurité nationale* of France in September. I would like to thank the European Union for the generous funding that enabled the organisation of these important events.
43. The close collaboration with the scientific community, including with organisations such as the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC), is essential to harnessing the expertise of the scientific community to better inform our work, as well as to raise awareness for our mission. The benefits of our engagement with scientists are clear from the powerful statements of support for the global norm against chemical weapons by chemistry practitioners around the world. IUPAC and 40 national chemical societies from Africa, Europe, and the Middle East have condemned the use of toxic chemicals as weapons. Major chemical industry groups from Europe and the United States of America have also spoken out, expressing their readiness to cooperate with the OPCW to ensure the exclusively peaceful uses of chemistry.
44. Earlier this year, the IUPAC formally endorsed both The Hague Ethical Guidelines and a global code of ethics for chemists. The OPCW had last year facilitated the development of these resources. I would like to acknowledge the presence of the President of IUPAC, Professor Natalia Tarasova, at this session of the Conference, during which we intend to formalise our partnership by signing a memorandum of understanding.
45. This year, the Secretariat has conducted the first biomedical sample analysis proficiency test. The test was successful, and the Secretariat now has a network of 17 laboratories from 14 Member States available for the off-site analysis of biomedical samples.
46. At the multipurpose OPCW facility in Rijswijk, the OPCW Laboratory provided training to our staff as well as a significant number of experts from States Parties. I encourage Member States to nominate personnel for training opportunities that will serve to enhance their analytical skills.

³ Fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

⁴ VERIFIN = Finnish Institute for Verification of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

47. Cooperation with the chemical industry was further enhanced this year. A coordination mechanism has been established with the International Council of Chemical Associations (ICCA). I welcome Mr Cal Dooley, ICCA Council Secretary and President and Chief Executive Officer of the American Chemistry Council, who is attending this session of the Conference.
48. The OPCW–ICCA Joint Steering Committee and the Chemical Industry Coordination Group met several times throughout the year to discuss common initiatives and projects. These cover activities in education and outreach, chemical safety and security, and verification activities. I would particularly like to thank the chemical industry representatives for their active participation in workshops and meetings organised by the OPCW, as well as for inviting the Secretariat to some of their events. We expect such positive cooperation to continue to gain strength.
49. Looking beyond the OPCW’s engagement with scientific and industry groups, this year has marked a new step in the evolution of the OPCW’s education and outreach. Following its establishment, the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach (ABEO) has held two sessions. Through the work of the ABEO, the OPCW can better connect with the full range of stakeholders in order to positively influence the implementation of the Convention in the future.
50. The new Board, comprising 15 members from all regional groups, has established an ambitious programme of work with a range of topics covering both strategic and practical goals. The Chairperson of the Board, Dr Jean-Pascal Zanders of Belgium, will brief the Conference on the Board’s first year of operation later this week.
51. For its part, the Secretariat continues to offer a range of educational material designed to support the implementation of the Convention, which we will look to build upon in the coming years with the advice and support of the ABEO. The translation this year of the Organisation’s factsheets into all official languages, with the support of the European Union, was an important step in making available more information about the Convention to wider audiences around the world.
52. Turning now to matters of administration and finance, in July, I presented the Draft Programme and Budget for 2017 to States Parties. This document was subsequently discussed in a series of budget facilitations, which were conducted from July through September. The final outcome represents a budget proposal that was endorsed by the Executive Council at its Eighty-Third Session in October. The Draft Programme and Budget for 2017 totals EUR 67.8 million and is now before the Conference for its approval (C-21/DEC/CRP.1, dated 21 October 2016).
53. There still remain unpaid outstanding assessed contributions for 2015 and 2016. I urge States Parties that have not paid their outstanding contributions to do so at the earliest and in full.
54. The Secretariat has continued with the implementation of the enterprise-resource-planning (ERP) system. Contracts have been signed for the licenses, support and maintenance, and the hosting thereof. The implementation phase of the project has started, with the initiation of the phase for solution design and data migration, along with the procurement process for an implementation partner for the core software of the ERP system.

55. This year, the Technical Secretariat has employed new strategies, methods, tools, and analytics to extend its reach to target audiences and to amplify its messages. The OPCW's yearly public engagement event, The Hague International Open Day, was held on 25 September and attracted over 600 people to OPCW Headquarters. It also translated into our engaging with thousands of people online.
56. An overhaul of the official website is under way and is anticipated to be launched by mid-2017. A short survey, reflecting inputs from the ABEO, has been developed to solicit suggestions from States Parties and other stakeholders about the new website. I encourage all concerned to contribute. In the meantime, measurable improvements continue in respect of the OPCW's digital communications capacity.
57. Preparations for the twentieth anniversary of the OPCW next year are well advanced. To mark the occasion, a solemn ceremony will be held in the "Hall of Knights" in the Houses of Parliament of the Netherlands in The Hague on 26 April. The programme for this event will be shared with delegations once it is ready.
58. The celebration of this important anniversary will provide a platform to convey our message on global chemical security to a wider audience. This will not only be a suitable moment to reflect on the achievements of chemical weapons disarmament, but also to highlight the continued relevance of the Convention and its essential contribution to global peace and security.
59. I invite States Parties to organise both international and national events throughout 2017 to raise awareness about the goals of the Convention and to strengthen outreach to a broad range of stakeholders. The Secretariat remains ready to assist States Parties in such undertakings.
60. This special milestone is indeed an occasion not only to rejoice but also to reflect. The Chemical Weapons Convention is counted as a major disarmament treaty. But we must not forget that it really evolved in response to humanitarian imperatives. The technical work of the OPCW is meant to serve deeply felt moral obligations. We must engage in deeper reflection and endeavour relentlessly to harness our collective energies and our common commitments, thus ensuring "for the sake of all mankind, to exclude completely the possibility of the use of chemical weapons".
61. As Director-General, at the Headquarters in The Hague and during my visits to States Parties, I avail myself of every opportunity to present the work of our Organisation in its true perspective—an extraordinary international endeavour made exemplary by the spirit of its States Parties. You have over the last two decades worked tirelessly and concertedly. The result is an Organisation that has always exceeded expectations; that has in its stride towards its goals always remained steady.
62. We are close to completely eliminating the entire declared global stockpile of chemical weapons. The Organisation has admirably fulfilled its function through the deliberations and oversight provided by its policy-making organs—the Executive Council and the Conference of the States Parties. They have resolved many difficult issues through compromise and consensus.
63. The ever-expanding reach of our international cooperation programmes is bringing tangible benefits to States Parties in areas that had not been foreseen at the time the

Organisation was established. This includes assistance for effective national implementation that has continually improved, also in the field of chemical safety and security.

64. Despite the risks and unprecedented challenges, our work in Syria stands out as one of the most important assignments that the Organisation has successfully undertaken and continues to fulfil. The recent operation in Libya is yet another example of the positive role that Member States play in support of the goals of the Convention.
65. Our membership is nearly universal and we hope that the few remaining countries that have yet to join the Convention will do so without delay.
66. These are just a few highlights from a history which is not that long, yet full of substance and solid attainments. Building on these past achievements will enable the OPCW to deal effectively with future challenges.
67. I am sure at this Conference and beyond, your own collective achievements in making the OPCW an abiding symbol of peace and security will spur you to even greater successes.
68. Mr Chairperson, my report to the Conference at its Twenty-First Session is detailed. The full text of my statement, detailing our work over the last year, will be circulated to delegations as an official document of this session.

Chemical demilitarisation and verification

69. As at 31 October 2016, a total of 70,494 MTs of Category 1 chemical weapons had been declared by the possessor States Parties. As I have mentioned, of this amount, 66,046 MTs, or almost 94% of the declared Category 1 chemical weapons had been destroyed under verification by the Secretariat. The aggregate amount destroyed includes 2,914 MTs that have been withdrawn from Category 1 chemical weapons stockpiles pursuant to Article VI of the Convention and subparagraph 2(d) of Part VI of the Verification Annex for purposes not prohibited under the Convention.
70. The destruction of Category 1 chemical weapons stockpiles declared by A State Party, Albania, India, Libya, and the Syrian Arab Republic has been completed. In total, 1,811 MTs of Category 2 chemical weapons have been declared by the possessor States Parties. The aggregate amount of Category 2 chemical weapons destroyed as at 31 October 2016 was 1,358 MTs, or 75% of the total amount declared. Albania, India, the Russian Federation, the Syrian Arab Republic, and the United States of America have completed the destruction of all of their declared Category 2 chemical weapons, whereas 61.56% of the amount declared by Libya has been destroyed.
71. As for Category 3 chemical weapons, A State Party, India, Libya, the Russian Federation, the Syrian Arab Republic, and the United States of America have previously completed the destruction of these weapons.

United States of America

72. As at 31 October 2016, the Secretariat had verified the destruction by the United States of America of 24,952 MTs, or 89.85% of its declared Category 1 chemical

weapons. In accordance with the detailed plan submitted by the United States of America for the destruction of remaining chemical weapons after the extended deadline of 29 April 2012 (EC-68/NAT.2, dated 13 April 2012), the United States of America plans that the destruction of its remaining Category 1 chemical weapons will be completed by September 2023. The United States of America has destroyed all of its Category 2 and Category 3 chemical weapons.

73. Eleven CWDFs have already completed the destruction of their respective stockpiles. There are two remaining CWDFs, one at Pueblo, Colorado, and the other at Blue Grass in Kentucky. These two destruction facilities will be augmented by supplemental explosive destruction technologies. The Explosive Destruction System (EDS) at the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (PCAPP) completed the destruction of its first campaign of problematic and hazardous munitions in February 2016; an amount of 0.6752 MTs of chemical agent has been verified as destroyed. The EDS will be reactivated as necessary. The Static Detonation Chamber (SDC) at the Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (BGCAPP) has completed 84.3% of construction, and systemisation now stands at 61%. The SDC will be used to destroy the mustard-filled munitions stocked at the Blue Grass site in Kentucky. Its facility agreement and the agreed detailed plan for verification are presently under review. While the overall schedule for the SDC is under review, there is no expected impact on the planned completion date.
74. In early January 2016, the Technical Secretariat conducted the final engineering review at the PCAPP main facility, which successfully completed the systemisation activities and commenced destruction operations on 7 September 2016. As at 31 October 2016, a total of 26,242 MTs of chemical agent had been verified as destroyed.
75. In addition, the United States of America conducted three recovered chemical warfare material destruction campaigns, specifically at the Tooele Army Depot-South, Utah; the Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey; and the Chemical Transfer Facility/Munition Assessment and Processing System at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. This amounted to 0.5964 MTs of chemical agent destroyed.
76. The BGCAPP main facility has completed 100% of construction work and systemisation is currently at 62%. Its facility agreement and the agreed detailed plan for verification are currently in development. The start of destruction operations is scheduled for 2020.

Russian Federation

77. The Russian Federation has continued to carry out the destruction of its chemical weapons this year. As at 31 October 2016, the total amount of Category 1 chemical weapons verified as destroyed was 38,337 MTs, or 95.92% of the total amount declared. In accordance with the detailed plan submitted by the Russian Federation for the destruction of remaining chemical weapons after the extended deadline of 29 April 2012 (EC-68/P/NAT.1, dated 3 April 2012 and its Addendum (EC-68/P/NAT.1/Add.1, dated 6 October 2014) and the Note by the Director-General (EC-80/DG.17, dated 14 September 2015), the Russian Federation plans that the destruction of its remaining Category 1 chemical weapons will be completed by 2020.

78. In total, six CWDFs in this State Party have completed operations. The Kizner CWDF is the only remaining facility in operation. As at 31 October 2016, the Kizner facility had completed the destruction of 4,115 MTs of chemical agent, or 71.63% of the total amount of chemical warfare agents designated for destruction at this facility. Work is under way to complete the construction of a new process building designed for the destruction of projectiles filled with lewisite.
79. As I mentioned earlier, at the invitation of the Russian Federation, a delegation of the Council visited the Kizner CWDF from 25 to 29 April 2016, pursuant to the decision of the Conference on the final extended deadline (C-16/DEC.11, dated 1 December 2011).

Libya

80. Libya has destroyed all of its Category 1 and 3 chemical weapons. As at 31 October 2016, Libya had destroyed 61.56% of its declared stockpiles of Category 2 chemical weapons.
81. As I mentioned previously, the removal of Libya's Category 2 chemical weapons was accomplished in a remarkably short period of time. In February of this year, the Libyan National Authority informed me that it would be unable to meet its destruction obligations without effective international assistance and requested that I consider the removal of the Category 2 chemical weapons for destruction outside the territory of Libya.
82. Following the Council's authorisation of the Secretariat to consider options for the destruction of the Category 2 chemical weapons in Libya (EC-M-51/DEC.1, dated 24 February 2016), a team of technical experts convened at OPCW Headquarters.
83. On 16 July 2016, I received a letter from the Libyan National Authority notifying me that the chemical weapons had been moved from the chemical weapons storage facility in Ruwagha to a secure location in the north of the country (EC-M-52/DG.1, dated 18 July 2016).
84. In meetings held on 20 and 27 July, the Council requested me to assist Libya in developing a plan for the destruction, along with recommendations for additional measures needed to ensure the expeditious transport, storage, and destruction of Libya's Category 2 chemical weapons (EC-M-52/DEC.1), and established the detailed requirements for the transport and destruction of Libya's Category 2 stockpiles. The Council further requested that a copy of the decision be transmitted to the United Nations Secretary-General.
85. On 22 July, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 2298 (2016), endorsing the aforementioned decision by the Executive Council and authorising Member States to acquire, control, transport, and transfer Libyan chemical weapons for the purpose of destruction.
86. On 26 August, the Council noted the contributions made by several States Parties, calling attention to the offer made by Denmark to provide a vessel for the transport of the chemicals, as well as to the offer made by Germany to host the destruction of the remaining Category 2 chemical weapons (EC-M-53/DEC.1).

87. As noted earlier, the Category 2 chemicals were transported to the GEKA mbH destruction facility in Munster, Germany, upon their arrival at the port of Bremen. To date, 38 MTs of tributylamine have been destroyed. The Secretariat was notified by the destruction facility that, in addition to the ongoing destruction of tributylamine, the destruction of 2-chloroethanol commenced on 31 October 2016.
88. The amount of the declared Category 2 chemicals was amended due to previously reported leakage and evaporation, which was assessed in the course of the decanting operations. The subsequent, amended, declaration removed 220 MTs. The Secretariat has reviewed the discrepancy and published a report of its findings (EC-83/S/2, dated 12 August 2016).
89. During decanting operations, one tank suffered an exothermic reaction resulting in the formation of a polymerised substance. Further analysis of the contents indicated small amounts of PCL_3 and $POCL_3$ of approximately five percent. Discussions are ongoing as to the final disposal of the contents of this tank.
90. Despite the security situation currently prevailing in Libya, the destruction of the pinacolyl alcohol was completed at a secure site in the Bir Al-Osta Milad region near Tripoli in January 2016. Due to the increasing volatility of the security situation, the Libyan National Authority requested assistance from the international community for the destruction of the remaining stockpiles.
91. In line with the aforementioned decision by the Council dated 26 August, I continue to report monthly to the Executive Council on the progress being made on the destruction of these chemicals and to include these reports as part of my monthly reports transmitted to the United Nations Security Council through the United Nations Secretary-General.

Iraq

92. Iraq has continued to keep the Secretariat and Member States informed of all steps being taken towards the assessment and destruction of its declared stockpiles of chemical weapons. The Secretariat, at the request of Iraq, and with assistance provided by Canada, arranged for training courses for Iraqi workers who are associated with the Al-Muthanna project. The training consisted of medical response and protection training, training on the handling of contaminated items and on sampling and analysis, and live-agent training. The Secretariat will continue to work closely with Iraq on efforts to dispose of the remnants remaining in Al-Muthanna. Due to the continuously difficult security situation, no further action has been taken.

Old and abandoned chemical weapons

93. As I mentioned previously, the destruction of chemical weapons abandoned by Japan on the territory of China continued this year at the Haerbaling Abandoned Chemical Weapons Test Destruction Facility (ACW-TDF) and the mobile destruction facility (MDF) located in Shijiazhuang. Since operations started at Haerbaling in December 2014, the Secretariat had verified the destruction of a total of 6,751 ACW items as at 28 October 2016. Furthermore, at the Shijiazhuang MDF a total of 2,313 ACW items had been verified as destroyed at this location as at 6 August of this year.

94. Since the last session of the Conference, 10 inspections of chemical weapons abandoned by Japan on the territory of China have been conducted in China. This figure includes the verification of destruction operations twice at Haerbaling and once in Shijiazhuang, and verification of six storage locations in Longjing, Ningan, Nianzishan, Yichun, Haerbaling, and Shijiazhuang. In addition, the Technical Secretariat attended one excavation and recovery operation at the recovery site in Hunchun in September.
95. Six inspections of old chemical weapons were conducted in six States Parties, namely, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. While the destruction operations have made considerable progress, recoveries of significant quantities of old chemical weapons continue to be made.

Chemical weapons production facilities

96. The total number of CWPFs has remained at 97 in 14 States Parties. Of those, 67 have been destroyed and 23 have been converted for purposes not prohibited under the Convention. Twelve States Parties have completed the destruction or conversion of all their declared CWPFs. All converted production facilities remain under systematic verification by the OPCW to ensure that they are fully consistent with the approved conversion requests.
97. In 2016, the Technical Secretariat conducted systematic inspections at three converted CWPFs in the Russian Federation. Following the decision by the Executive Council at its Sixty-Seventh Session (EC-67/DEC.7, dated 16 February 2012) on the nature of continued verification measures at converted CWPFs 10 years after certification of their conversion, the Secretariat inspected four such CWPFs in the Russian Federation and one CWPF in A State Party in 2016.

OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria

98. The FFM continued its work in accordance with Executive Council decisions EC-M-48/DEC.1 (dated 4 February 2015) and EC-M-50/DEC.1 (dated 23 November 2015), as well as with United Nations Security Council resolution 2209 (2015). Guided by these decisions, the FFM continued to carry out deployments, and collected and analysed open-source material and information provided by States Parties and other sources. In this context, the FFM studied available information relating to more than 60 allegations of the use of chemical weapons that were reported in the Syrian Arab Republic between December 2015 and November 2016; of these, 28 incidents have been reported since 1 August 2016. Particular attention was given to widely reported incidents such as the ones in Saraqib on 1 August, in Aleppo on 2 August, Zubdiya on 10 August, Al-Sukkari on 6 September, and Kafr Zita on 1 October.
99. In February, following a deployment to the Syrian Arab Republic, the FFM issued an addendum to its report on the alleged incident in Darayya (S/1318/2015/Rev.1/Add.1, dated 29 February 2016). The FFM noted that no new information had come to light necessitating a change to the report's conclusion.

100. In September and October 2016, a team was deployed to Damascus in response to a request by the Syrian Arab Republic, dated 15 August 2016, to the effect that the FFM investigate an incident of alleged use of chemical weapons on 2 August 2016 in the area of Al-Awamid in Aleppo. During these missions, the FFM conducted 25 interviews and recovered 14 samples, which are currently being analysed.

Declarations

101. As at 7 November 2016, only one State Party had yet to submit its initial declaration to the Technical Secretariat under Articles III and VI. The Secretariat will continue to work with this State Party and stands ready to provide assistance regarding the submission of the outstanding initial declaration.
102. The Secretariat continues to make every effort to clarify declarations of riot control agents with 15 States Parties. As at 4 November 2016, out of 191 States Parties having submitted their initial declarations, 138 States Parties declared possession of riot control agents, 51 States Parties declared no possession of such agents, and two States Parties had not provided any information regarding riot control agents.
103. The timeliness of submission of annual declarations on past activities (ADPAs) has improved remarkably over the last three years. The improvement for the last submission of ADPA, for 2015, was significant; 79 States Parties, or 86%, submitted their declaration on time. This is the highest number and percentage of declarations submitted on time since the Convention entered into force in 1997. The timeliness of submission of the annual declaration of anticipated activities remains high, with a rate of over 90% over the past years. I commend States Parties for this improvement and encourage them to maintain this high level of timely and accurate submissions of declarations to the Secretariat.

Transfer discrepancies related to the import and export of Schedule 2 and Schedule 3 chemicals

104. Based on the current declarations, considerable discrepancies in transfers of Schedule 2 and 3 chemicals remain. During the last four years, approximately 80 States Parties were involved each year in about 500 transfer discrepancies of Schedule 2 and Schedule 3 chemicals; of these discrepancies, only five percent were resolved.
105. The Secretariat continues to assist the States Parties in resolving transfer discrepancies at the national and international levels, in particular through the provision of training for national stakeholders. In 2016, the Secretariat held four regional customs courses and one training of trainers course for customs training institutions with emphasis on means for resolving transfer discrepancies.
106. In addition the Secretariat continues to cooperate with other international organisations, such as the WCO and the Chemical Abstracts Service, and to explore other possible collaborations.

Survey on the implementation of Schedule 2A/2A* low-concentration guidelines

107. The decision of the Conference of the States Parties at its Fourteenth Session (C-14/DEC.4, dated 2 December 2009) on guidelines regarding concentration limits for mixtures containing Schedule 2A and Schedule 2A* chemicals required States Parties to implement the guidelines as soon as practicable. As at 4 November, 40 States Parties had implemented the decision and 20 States Parties had not yet done so.
108. I encourage all States Parties that have not previously informed the Secretariat of the status of implementation of the decision, to complete the sixth survey, which was released in September 2016 (S/1420/2016, dated 13 September 2016), by the deadline of 31 December 2016.

Electronic processing

109. The electronic processing of declarations continues to register positive developments. For ADPA 2015, a total of 96% of the declared plant sites were declared electronically, with five additional States Parties using the electronic declaration tool for National Authorities (EDNA) for the first time. The total number of States Parties making use of EDNA currently stands at 53.
110. In July 2015, the Secretariat released a new version of EDNA (version 3.3) and will continue to improve this important tool to respond to the needs of the National Authorities and the Secretariat.
111. The Secretariat provided presentations in regional and subregional meetings, as well as various courses, on electronic declarations and the use of the EDNA. Training sessions and presentations for EDNA and the SIX system will be held in the margins of this session of the Conference; details are available in the OPCW Journal. I encourage you to contact the Secretariat should you require guidance or assistance on the electronic submission of declarations, or in order to request support and training regarding the use of the software.

Cooperation with the International Council of Chemical Associations

112. In 2016, the OPCW-ICCA Joint Steering Committee agreed that the issue of transfer discrepancies should be addressed as a collaborative effort to obtain an overview of the data sets, methods, and tools used in industry to monitor the trade in chemicals. The results of the joint efforts of the OPCW and ICCA to identify ways to use this additional mechanism for National Authorities to monitor the trade will be shared with States Parties.

Cooperation with the World Customs Organization

113. The Secretariat continues its cooperation with the WCO to support the identification of the most globally traded scheduled chemicals covered by the Chemical Weapons Convention. The goal is to allocate unique international six-digit Harmonized System (HS) codes to the most traded scheduled chemicals, helping the national customs administrations in their identification; this would also contribute to the submission of

more accurate and complete trade declarations to the Secretariat, which will eventually reduce transfer discrepancies.

114. During the first phase of this project, 33 of the most traded chemicals were added to the HS Convention, which undergoes an update every five years. These changes will come into effect on 1 January 2017. The Secretariat has updated the tools for the identification of scheduled chemicals accordingly. The second phase of the project seeks to add another 15 chemicals to the list of most traded scheduled chemicals in the next edition of the HS Convention, in 2022.

Inspectorate training

115. Owing to the forthcoming departure of a large group of inspectors in January 2017, two groups of new inspectors have come on board in 2016. The first group (Group O) was comprised of 12 new inspectors who joined the OPCW in January 2016 and completed their mandatory training by 28 April 2016. Additionally, a group of 27 new inspectors (Group P), covering all required specialities, started their mandatory initial training in October 2016; this will be completed by the end of December. During the reporting period, the new Capacity-Building and Contingency-Planning Cell provided 50 individual courses, comprising 2,532 inspector days, to 474 participants, which required 1,084 instructor days. All participants were inspectors, some of whom attended several training courses.
116. The Capacity-Building and Contingency-Planning Cell also continued to provide the mandatory inspector refresher courses to keep inspectors abreast of technological and verification policy developments, as well as refresher courses on the use of protective equipment and the OPCW confidentiality regime. Several training courses were conducted for newly promoted inspectors.
117. Training activities included the initial toxic chemical training, which provides participants with the knowledge, skills and experience to safely and effectively perform on-site verification activities in a toxic environment. The Safe and Secure Approaches in Field Environments and contingency operations skills courses, which are required for Secretariat personnel deployed to high risk areas, were among specialised courses conducted in 2016. Additional specialised courses comprised the Health Physics Expert level 4A and Non-Destructive Evaluation (NDE) theory levels I and II. The NDE work permit course level I for OPCW staff was conducted at the Secretariat's premises in Rijswijk. Italy hosted the NDE work permit level II course for OPCW staff in order to maintain their certification and improve their knowledge and skills of the OPCW NDE approved methods.
118. During this reporting period, the United States of America continued to provide the initial and refresher course sessions of Hazardous Waste Operations Emergency Response (HAZWOPER), which are mandatory under United States regulations for individuals operating within the United States CWDFs.
119. The Inspectorate Division also conducted the International Air Transport Association (IATA) dangerous goods regulations training course to make sure that OPCW staff members are trained in accordance with IATA regulations to pack and transport dangerous goods, such as chemical samples, by air.

120. Furthermore, the Capacity-Building and Contingency-Planning Cell contributed to the fifth OPCW assistance and protection course for instructors, and provided expertise in courses conducted in Belarus, Indonesia, and Mexico for the training of local authorities.
121. I would like to thank Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Italy, the Netherlands, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America for the technical and in-kind support provided throughout this year to the inspector training programme.

Industry verification

122. In 2016, the Secretariat was scheduled to carry out 241 Article VI inspections. By mid-December, all 241 inspections in 50 States Parties, including 11 with sampling and analysis, are scheduled to be completed.
123. In 2016, more States Parties have agreed to allow sequential inspections consisting of two consecutive inspections in one week. This results in savings in inspector time and travel costs. I am happy to report that, throughout 2016, sequential inspections have been conducted in over 45% of Article VI inspections. This involved 108 inspections conducted as 54 sequential ones.
124. The Secretariat welcomes inputs by States Parties on improvements in the verification process through consultations within the Industry Cluster and meetings of National Authorities, as has been demonstrated in several papers and decisions this year. A Note by the Secretariat on this subject (S/1419/2016, dated 13 September 2016) addressed the Technical Secretariat's revised templates for preliminary findings and final inspection reports for Schedule 1, Schedule 2, and Schedule 3 inspections. The revised reporting templates for Article VI inspections were implemented in mid-September. Consultations on the Scientific Advisory Board's recommendations on verification (SAB/REP/1/15, dated June 2015) and on the SAB report on the convergence of chemistry and biology (SAB/REP/1/14, date 26 June 2014) are still ongoing. A Note by the Secretariat on this subject (S/1436/2016, dated 14 November 2016) addressed the survey on biomediated processes.
125. The Technical Secretariat continues to provide assistance to States Parties to fulfil their obligations under the Convention. The Verification Division organises technical consultations, along with training and research utilising databases on chemical producers, to draw attention to possible declarable activities when requested by any State Party. These activities have resulted in more accurate declarations.
126. Of the 11 sampling and analysis missions mentioned previously, nine were conducted at Schedule 2 facilities, while the remaining two were held at other chemical production facilities (OCPFs). A Secretariat Note on this subject (S/1383/2016, dated 10 May 2016) addressed the progress regarding sampling and analysis in Article VI inspections. The revised methodology for the selection of OCPFs, as reported in S/1348/2016 (dated 4 February 2016), has continued to show good results in terms of relevance of sites selected for inspection. The methodology takes into account both the number and the relevance of plant sites declared and results in a correlation between the number of declared OCPF sites and the number of inspections in each State Party. This approach continues to result in more inspections at highly relevant

sites, as well as in a continued increase in the number of States Parties receiving inspections. The revised selection process allows the Secretariat to better target more relevant OCPF inspections with a broader geographical distribution.

Technical support from the OPCW Laboratory

127. Our network of partner laboratories available for off-site analysis of samples remains strong, with 19 laboratories from 15 Member States having met the requisite criteria to become or retain their status as OPCW designated laboratories for environmental analysis.
128. This year, the Secretariat has conducted the first biomedical sample analysis proficiency test. This test was concluded successfully, and the Secretariat now has a network of 17 laboratories from 14 Member States available for the off-site analysis of biomedical samples.
129. Next year, in January, the OPCW Laboratory will be conducting the first exercise in a series of exercises on the analysis of biologically derived toxins. These exercises will enhance the capabilities of our partner laboratories in this area.
130. To date in 2016, four of our partner laboratories have analysed 128 samples in support of both the DAT and the deployments of the FFM. I wish to thank the staff of the laboratories and their representatives for their assistance. Additionally, the OPCW Laboratory has analysed a number of samples in support of TAVs.
131. It should be noted that, before we can send samples to a designated laboratory for off-site analysis, we must have a formal agreement in place with the laboratories. To date, we only have agreements in place with half of our designated laboratories. I strongly encourage all Member States that host designated laboratories to assist their laboratories in arranging agreements with the Secretariat.
132. At the multipurpose training facility in Rijswijk, the OPCW Laboratory provided a total of 19 days of training in five sessions to Secretariat staff and 16 days of training in an additional five sessions for external participants. A total of 29 experts from 17 Member States attended a training session in Rijswijk.

Science and technology

133. In addition to the previously mentioned activities of the SAB this year, the Board's work in 2016 included intersessional reports comprising advice on scheduled chemicals and chemical agent sample storage and stability. The SAB has produced a substantive body of work that the Secretariat is reviewing, with a view to developing proposals for taking the Board's advice forward. The reports of the SAB and my responses thereto are available on the OPCW website.
134. I wish to thank the SAB Chairperson, Dr Christopher Timperley of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the Vice-Chairperson Mr Cheng Tang of China, for their great commitment in organising and facilitating the work of the Board and for their efforts to engage with States Parties. The SAB Chairperson will address the Conference on Thursday afternoon. I take this opportunity to thank all members of the SAB who have completed their terms in 2016, and look forward to

welcoming new SAB members in 2017. As the SAB continues to develop its report to the Fourth Review Conference in 2017, it will require the appropriate support for its activities. I hope that States Parties will continue to respond favourably to my request for voluntary contributions to the SAB trust fund (S/1344/2016, dated 29 January 2016). In this regard, I wish to thank New Zealand for its recent contribution.

International cooperation and assistance

Africa Programme

135. As mentioned earlier in this statement, the Secretariat has continued to implement the third phase of the Africa Programme, including a wide range of capacity-building activities tailored to the specific context of African States Parties.

Article VII: implementation support

136. Adoption of national implementing legislation under the Convention remains an important priority in the provision of technical assistance. Three internship programmes for legal drafters and National Authority representatives, which were organised in The Hague in August, October, and November for representatives from the Africa, Asia, and GRULAC⁵ regions, resulted in the preparation of draft legislation by seven States Parties as well as draft action plans for its adoption. The Secretariat will continue to provide support to the States Parties.
137. In December 2016, the Secretariat will organise a workshop for legal drafters and National Authority representatives in Angola that seeks to provide tailor-made assistance to Portuguese-speaking African States Parties in developing the initial draft of their implementing legislation. The Technical Secretariat piloted a stakeholders' forum for States Parties in Africa on the adoption of national implementing legislation, which was designed as a programme to address the challenges of the adoption process in this region. Funded by the European Union and hosted by the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, the forum, which took place in Dar-es-Salaam from 8 to 10 November, brought together African States, as well as a number of international and regional organisations. Following the success of the pilot stakeholders' forum in 2016, the Secretariat proposes to organise similar events in the Africa, Asia, and GRULAC regions in 2017.
138. In accordance with decision C-14/DEC.12 (dated 4 December 2009) of the Conference of the States Parties at its Fourteenth Session, the Secretariat has issued annual reports on the status of implementation of Article VII of the Chemical Weapons Convention in 2016 (EC-83/DG.8 C-21/DG.9, EC-83/DG.9 C-21/DG.10, and EC-83/DG.11 C-21/DG.11, all dated 16 September 2016). Currently, out of the 192 States Parties to the Convention, 150 States Parties have adopted national implementing legislation, 118 States Parties have legislation covering all of the initial measures, and 32 States Parties have legislation covering some of the initial measures. Forty-two States Parties have yet to adopt any legislation.

⁵ GRULAC = Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

139. To improve the capabilities of National Authorities, the Secretariat has continued to offer a basic course for new personnel of National Authorities, as well as training courses on national escorts for inspections and on fulfilling Article VI declaration requirements.
140. The Eighteenth Annual Meeting of National Authorities held from 23 to 25 November served as an important global platform for the exchange of good practices in the implementation of the Convention, as well as for the discussion of challenges in its implementation. Four regional meetings of National Authorities, hosted earlier this year by the Islamic Republic of Iran, Lithuania, Paraguay, and South Africa, were organised back-to-back with regional meetings on education and outreach. The meetings were helpful in order to take stock of the current education and outreach activities at the national level and to consider potential avenues for development of new activities and approaches.
141. In 2016, four Partnership and Mentorship programmes have been initiated. These involve Switzerland and Namibia, Brazil and Angola, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Malawi, and Peru and El Salvador.
142. The Secretariat continued to build the capacity of key stakeholders at the national level that work closely with National Authorities, such as customs authorities and the chemical industry. The Secretariat organised a series of training courses on the transfers regime of the Convention and the tools for identification of scheduled chemicals in various OPCW regions. To ensure sustainability as well as stronger ownership and commitment by the States Parties in relation to training of their customs officers on the enforcement of the transfers regime of scheduled chemicals under the Convention, the Secretariat organised a pilot training of trainers course for representatives of customs training institutions during the month of July in The Hague. Furthermore, with the support of extra-budgetary funding from Qatar, the Secretariat organised the third annual meeting of representatives of chemical industry and National Authorities in Doha from 16 to 18 October.
143. The Secretariat continues to strengthen cooperation with several collaborative partners for the effective implementation of the Convention. Engagement of the WCO, as the global customs organisation, was critical for the success of training activities this year. The Secretariat expects that its cooperation with the WCO will be further deepened as a result of the adoption of the memorandum of understanding between the OPCW and the WCO, which was approved by the Executive Council at its most recent session in October.

Article X: assistance and protection

144. Implementation of the Article X provisions on assistance and protection continued during 2016. Modest increases have been registered this year in the contributions by States Parties to the Voluntary Fund for Assistance and to unilateral offers pursuant to paragraph 7 of Article X. Submissions of information by States Parties about their national protective programmes against the use of chemical weapons, however, have been lower than in the previous two years.
145. As at 31 November, 66 States Parties had submitted information about their national protective programmes against the use of chemical weapons. I would like to reiterate

the importance of this particular transparency and confidence measure for the security regime established by the Convention and strongly encourage States Parties to review the status of their obligations under Article X, particularly those contained in paragraphs 4 and 7.

146. The databank established under paragraph 5 containing information regarding means of protection against chemical weapons was accessed 231 times between 1 June 2015 and 1 June 2016. This represents a 35% increase in the number of visitors since the previous period. The databank is currently in the process of renewal and will remain accessible through the OPCW external website in 2017.
147. In accordance with paragraph 5 of Article X, the Secretariat has continued to provide expert advice and assist States Parties in identifying suitable avenues for the implementation of their programmes for the development and improvement of a protective capability against chemical weapons.
148. The Technical Secretariat organised and conducted international and regional assistance and protection training courses and capacity-building activities under Article X jointly with the governments of Argentina, Belarus, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Czechia, Indonesia, Jordan, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Poland, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Slovakia, South Africa, Switzerland, Turkey, Uganda, and the United Republic of Tanzania. I am grateful to all States Parties that hosted events and/or provided in-kind contributions to assistance-and-protection programmes.
149. In accordance with recommendations of the Second and Third Review Conferences,⁶ and aiming at enhancing efficiency in the utilisation of available resources and expertise in the regions and subregions, the Assistance and Protection Branch has successfully continued to implement its tailored approach to training. This approach is based on a three-component cycle comprised of the components "basic", "advanced", and "exercise". Training cycles were conducted in the Asia, Eastern Europe, and GRULAC regions this year, and training continued for Arabic-speaking States Parties in the Middle East and North Africa. Regional activities in Asia included training for police responders that was tailored to the circumstances of responding to an incident involving the use of chemical weapons or other release of toxic chemicals. International training courses were carried out in Pakistan and Turkey.
150. Under the auspices of the Africa Programme, and with the financial and technical support of Czechia and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, a regional capacity-building project for the East African Community was launched. The first operational training as part of this project took place in Uganda in early November. The Technical Secretariat also began its substantial work within a similar project for members of the Economic Community of West African States.
151. The Technical Secretariat also provided support to national capacity-building efforts in Lebanon, Sudan, and Paraguay with the support of the Government of Czechia.

⁶ The Second and Third Special Sessions of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

152. Furthermore, the Secretariat successfully continued to expand its Instructor Development and Exchange Programme. This programme involves the international exchange of expertise and the fostering of best practices that will enhance response capacity by States Parties, both individually and regionally, and will continue to improve the state of readiness of the Organisation necessary to respond to a request of assistance.
153. In August, the fifth international training course for instructors provided advanced training to a new international team of 18 first responders. The conduct of this kind of course is an integral part of the Secretariat's endeavour to expand the training of trainers approach in order to enhance the effectiveness of expert advice provided to States Parties under paragraph 5 of Article X. State Party-sponsored training of trainers courses were also conducted in collaboration with Belarus, Czechia, and South Africa. For the first time, an assistance and protection laboratory course on analysis of chemical warfare agent samples for experts involved in protection and response activities was conducted in October at the OPCW Laboratory in the Netherlands. Finally, the sixteenth annual workshop to coordinate assistance and protection under Article X of the Chemical Weapons Convention is planned to take place next month in Qatar.
154. As part of strengthening its capacity to respond to a request for assistance under Article X of the Convention, in September the Secretariat participated in the TRIPLEX 2016 exercise, an international exercise organised by the International Humanitarian Partnership from 24 to 30 September. The Secretariat also continued its close cooperation with other relevant international organisations in the field of assistance and protection against chemical weapons, such as the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, the WHO, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, INTERPOL, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, the European Union, and others.
155. In the context of the International Support Network for Victims of Chemical Weapons, and in accordance with decision C-16/DEC.13 (dated 2 December 2011), the updated version of the Practical Guide for Medical Management of Chemical Weapons Casualties was published in April. The Secretariat is also engaged in the preparation of an OPCW symposium on support for victims of chemical weapons. In this context, I would like to thank Professor Alastair Hay of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for his donation of the EUR 45,000 cash prize he received following his selection for the second OPCW-The Hague Award to the voluntary fund of the International Support Network for Victims of Chemical Weapons. This donation will be used to fund future projects within this initiative. I also wish to thank the Government of Andorra for its voluntary contribution of EUR 5,000 to the trust fund in July.
156. I take this opportunity to once again encourage States Parties to make further contributions to this trust fund, which will facilitate the realisation of activities in support of victims of chemical weapons as set out in the aforementioned decision of the Conference.

Article XI: international cooperation

157. Since the last session of the Conference, the Secretariat has continued to develop and deliver its international cooperation programmes in three focus areas, namely, integrated chemicals management, enhancing laboratory capabilities, and promoting chemical knowledge. The seventeenth edition of the Associate Programme was successfully conducted from 29 July to 30 September and was attended by participants from 31 Member States, namely, Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Burundi, Cameroon, China, Cuba, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, El Salvador, Gambia, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Nigeria, Pakistan, Paraguay, the Philippines, Poland, Romania, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tunisia, Ukraine, and Zimbabwe. Maldives and Somalia were represented for the first time this year.
158. I wish to express my appreciation for the continuous support offered to this programme by various partners, including the WCO, the European Chemical Industry Council, the European Association of Chemical Distributors, the European Chemicals Agency, the Dutch customs authorities, the Port of Rotterdam, the University of Surrey, and the Technical University of Delft. Since its inception in 2000, the Associate Programme has trained 424 experts from 118 States Parties.
159. The alumni of the programme continued to provide strong support for the national implementation of the Convention in their home countries. The OPCW is also benefiting directly from the expertise of those alumni, 20 of whom have joined the Technical Secretariat as professional staff members. Furthermore, three alumni were appointed in 2016 to serve on the ABEO and the SAB. Furthermore, the Technical Secretariat launched the first *Alumni Bulletin* this year.
160. Under the Chemical Safety and Security Programme, six courses were hosted by nine States Parties, benefiting a total of 322 participants. These States were Bangladesh, Brazil, Cyprus, Germany, Kenya, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, and South Africa. Two other events are scheduled to be held in December in Latvia and Qatar.
161. With the support of the Federal Foreign Office of the Government of Germany, the OPCW, in cooperation with the University of Wuppertal, organised two parallel courses on chemical safety management from 4 to 8 April, for Member States in the Africa region and in the Asia and GRULAC regions, respectively. A total of 23 specialists from 22 countries benefited from these two parallel courses. Since the inception of the OPCW's Chemical Safety and Security Programme in 2009, 10 courses have so far been organised jointly with the Federal Foreign Office of the Government of Germany and the University of Wuppertal, providing capacity-building for 118 experts from more than 50 countries in the Africa, Asia, and GRULAC regions.
162. The Secretariat will convene, with financial support from Qatar, a forum on integrated chemicals management in petrochemical industries in Doha, Qatar, on 7 and 8 December 2016. This will be the first such forum on the peaceful uses of chemistry.

163. The OPCW and Latvia will organise, with financial support from the United States of America, a workshop on needs assessment and best practices on chemical safety and security management in Riga from 13 to 15 December.
164. As regards the implementation of Conference decision C-16/DEC.10 (dated 1 December 2011), the Technical Secretariat conducted, based on inputs from National Authorities and relevant stakeholders, a needs assessment on tools and guidance that would be helpful for promoting chemical safety and security. In this context, the Technical Secretariat invited—and continues to invite—States Parties to provide their feedback on a voluntary basis.
165. Based on the collection of data from States Parties, the Secretariat will provide a report on needs assessment and a compilation of tools, guidance, and best practices on chemical safety and security management on 30 November at the World Forum during this session of the Conference. This report will serve as guidance for the Secretariat to develop future programmes on the basis of the needs identified by States Parties.
166. Women are playing an increasingly important role in the peaceful uses of chemistry and they must be empowered to reach their full potential. In this context, the Technical Secretariat organised the OPCW's first symposium on women in chemistry on 17 May 2016 at OPCW Headquarters, followed by a three-day basic analytical chemistry course for women chemists at the OPCW Laboratory. The symposium was attended by 70 participants from 41 countries with representatives from government, the scientific community, chemical industry, academia, and civil society. In the framework of promoting the peaceful uses of chemistry and in order to facilitate the understanding of States Parties' relevant trade policies, the OPCW co-organised, together with the Government of China, the first seminar entitled "Chemical Trade: Current Practices and Challenges" on 16 and 17 June in Rizhao City, China. The seminar provided an opportunity for States Parties to share information, experiences, and best practices in respect of trade management.
167. To explore substitutes for the use of toxic and scheduled chemicals in industry, the Secretariat organised an experts' group meeting on green chemistry at OPCW Headquarters on 15 April. The participants, comprising prominent experts from academia, industry, and international organisations, recommended active engagement by the OPCW in the promotion of green chemistry for peace and sustainability, especially through its capacity-building and outreach initiatives. The Secretariat also issued a call for proposals for research projects in the area of green chemistry and will provide a fellowship in this field within the OPCW Fellowship Programme.
168. The Technical Secretariat organised a special session at the "6th International IUPAC Conference on Green Chemistry", held in Venice, Italy, from 4 to 8 September, sharing the OPCW's green chemistry initiative to promote non-toxic substitutes and raising awareness of how, in line with The Hague Ethical Guidelines, green chemistry can support the aims of the Convention by helping to reduce, or even fully eliminate, the use of toxic chemicals. The OPCW also participated in two inter-agency meetings on sound chemicals management, which were held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 10 to 12 May, and in Vienna, Austria on 18 October, and participated in the 26th Meeting of the Working Group on Chemical Accidents, which was held from 25 to

27 October in Paris, France. As part of its continuous efforts to enhance laboratory capabilities in Member States, the Technical Secretariat issued an invitation to invite expressions of interest in joining the Laboratory Twinning Initiative. This initiative is aimed at improving the technical competence of laboratories in Member States whose economies are either developing or in transition and intends to improve their performance in the OPCW proficiency tests, with a view to achieving OPCW designated status. To date, the Secretariat has received seven requests from laboratories in Algeria, Botswana, Brazil, and Turkey seeking such assistance. The first twinning initiative between VERIFIN in Finland and the Centre for Chemistry of the University of Belgrade in Serbia is ongoing.

169. In the framework of the Fellowship Programme, the Secretariat provided funding to nine fellowships in 2016 to support the mobility of scientists from Brazil, Lesotho, Romania, the Russian Federation, Serbia, South Africa, Ukraine, Uruguay, and Zambia. Other training and capacity-building initiatives in analytical chemistry included nine analytical chemistry courses held in six States Parties, namely, Finland, Malaysia, South Africa, Spain, the Netherlands, and Sweden. These courses were attended by a total of 94 participants. In the series of courses launched in May 2015 to train laboratories seeking to pass the proficiency tests and to subsequently receive OPCW designated status, the OPCW conducted the second international laboratory training course at its laboratory facility in Rijswijk. This programme was aimed at expanding the global network of partner laboratories that can perform analysis of samples under the OPCW's verification regime. The second training programme was conducted from 9 to 13 May, with the participation of six laboratory specialists from Algeria and Pakistan.
170. In continuation of our cooperation with VERIFIN, two courses took place in Finland this year. These covered the subjects of enhancement of laboratory skills in laboratory quality management and the enhancement of laboratory skills in quantitative mass spectrometry.
171. Under the Equipment-Exchange Programme, eight functional OPCW laptops have been donated in 2016 to requesting National Authorities. The Secretariat maintains continuous contact with potential donors to encourage donations and is currently developing an online portal to facilitate the matching of requests and offers.
172. In order to facilitate the exchange of scientific and technical information in areas relating to the peaceful uses of chemistry, the Technical Secretariat supported 62 participants from 42 Member States to attend 12 conferences in Georgia, Greece, Italy, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mauritius, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Uganda, and Uruguay.
173. The Secretariat also continued to fund 16 research projects in the field of peaceful applications of chemistry. In addition, the Review Committee for Research Projects recommended funding for 20 new research projects to commence in late 2016 and early 2017.
174. From 18 to 20 October, a new regional workshop entitled "Policy and Diplomacy for Scientists: Introduction to Responsible Research Practices in Chemical and Biological Sciences" was organised in Pretoria, South Africa. The event focused on raising

awareness of young scientists on the issues of dual uses of chemicals, ethics, education, sustainability, and related policies in science, as well as the role of science and scientists in policy making. It was the first initiative of this kind organised by the Secretariat, and was held in collaboration with the World Academy of Sciences (TWAS), the InterAcademy Partnership, and the Academy of Science of South Africa.

175. A workshop to review the progress of the implementation of Article XI of the Convention was held at OPCW Headquarters on 22 November. The workshop, entitled “Review and Evaluation of the Components of an Agreed Framework for the Full Implementation of Article XI”, offered a suitable platform for an exchange of views on the current status of the implementation of the international cooperation activities under Article XI. It also generated active discussions and an exchange of views regarding the full implementation of this pillar of the Convention in the future.
176. In 2016, the evaluation and impact assessment framework of the various programmes has been reviewed and further strengthened in order to ensure the most relevant feedback from the various stakeholders, which could be translated into lessons learned for future implementation of the programmes. This year’s report on progress made and review of the status of implementation of Article XI (EC-83/DG.17 C-21/DG.14, dated 21 September 2016) is before the Conference at this session.
177. I would like to extend my gratitude to all States Parties and training institutions that supported activities regarding cooperation and assistance through in-kind and financial contributions this year.

Universality and external relations

178. The Conference has before it the annual report on the implementation of the action plan for the universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention during the period from 16 August 2015 to 15 August 2016 (EC-83/DG.5 C-21/DG.7, dated 18 August 2016). The report details activities undertaken by the Secretariat to promote universal adherence to the Convention.
179. During the course of 2016, the Secretariat continued to engage with representatives of States not Party to the Convention, including through OPCW-related activities. Contacts have continued with representatives of South Sudan in New York and Brussels, with a view to facilitating South Sudan's joining of the Convention. Following the confirmation of the Foreign Minister of South Sudan in early 2016 regarding his country’s commitment to joining the Convention, the Technical Secretariat has been actively engaging with South Sudanese officials towards that end. Follow-up continues, with a view to advancing options for that country to join the Convention.
180. In the last 12 months, we have received a number of high-level guests at OPCW Headquarters, notably H.E. Mr Habib Essid, Prime Minister of Tunisia; H.E. Mr Ahmet Davutoğlu, Prime Minister of Turkey; H.E. The Honourable Stéphane Dion, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada; H.E. Mr Jean-Marc Ayrault, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Development of France; H.E. Mr David Sergeenko, Minister of Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia; H.E. Dr Mohammad Javad Zarif, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran; H.E. Mr Nikola

Poposki, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; H.E. Mr Abdusalam Hadliye Omer, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Investment Promotion of Somalia; H.E. Mr Carlos Foradori, Deputy Foreign Minister of Argentina; H.E. Mr Alejandro Solano Ortiz, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica; H.E. Mr Wegger Strømmen, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway; The Rt Hon. Baroness Joyce Anelay of St Johns DBE, Minister of State of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; H.E. Ms Lone Dencker Wisborg, State Secretary for Foreign Policy of Denmark; H.E. Mr Peter Stenlund, State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland; H.E. Mr Marek Ziółkowski, Under Secretary of State in charge of Eastern Policy and Security of Poland; H.E. Ms Rose Gottemoeller, Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security of the United States of America; Dr Patricia Flor, Commissioner for Disarmament and Arms Control of Germany; and H.E. Mr Hekmat Khalil Karzai, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan. We also received H.E. Mr Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations and Dr Lassina Zerbo, Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization.

181. So far in 2016, I have extended visits to a number of countries including Bangladesh, Cyprus, France, Germany, Poland, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Slovenia, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. During these visits, I held bilateral discussions with senior government officials and addressed various audiences including at ministries, universities, research centres, National Authorities, and specialised agencies.
182. In February, I delivered a lecture at a Nobel Peace Prize series at the Frauenkirche in Dresden, Germany, and attended the 2016 Munich Security Conference later that month. During my visit to Moscow, the Russian Federation, in April, I met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr Sergey Lavrov. During a visit to Slovenia in May, I addressed the NATO⁷ Conference on Weapons of Mass Destruction, Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation held in Ljubljana, and met with the Minister of Health, H.E. Ms Milojka Kolar Celarc; the Minister of Defence, H.E. Ms Andreja Katič; and the State Secretary for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr Bogdan Benko. In Cyprus, I opened a chemical safety and security workshop for North Africa and Middle Eastern countries and met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr Ioannis Kasoulides; and the Minister of Defence, H.E. Mr Christoforos Fokaides; as well as other senior government officials. That same month, I also delivered a keynote speech at the 19th International Chemical Weapons Demilitarisation Conference held in London, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and met with Minister Tobias Ellwood, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.
183. In July, I held a speech at the annual retreat of the Max Planck Institute for Heart and Lung Research in Bad Nauheim, Germany, and opened the Spiez CONVERGENCE Conference in Switzerland in early September. I also paid a visit to the Republic of Korea, where I delivered a keynote speech at the fifth Seoul Defence Dialogue and

⁷

NATO = North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

made statements at the Hankuk University of Foreign Studies and the Korean National Diplomatic Academy. On this occasion, I met with the Minister of National Defence, H.E. Mr Han Min-koo; the Unification Minister, H.E. Mr Hong Yong-pyo; the First Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr Lim Sung-nam; and the Vice Minister of National Defence, H.E. Mr Hwang In-moo.

184. In October, I opened the regional seminar on chemical safety and security management in Dhaka, Bangladesh, and met with Bangladesh's Foreign Minister, H.E. Mr Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali, M.P.; the Minister for Industries, H.E. Mr Alhaz Amir Hossain Amu; and other senior officials. During the same month, I delivered a lecture at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service in Qatar, and opened a training course for National Authorities of States Parties to the Convention on training escorts for inspections. On the occasion of this visit, I met with a number of senior government officials, including the Chairman of the National Committee for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, H.E. Major General Staff Nasser Mohamed Al-Ali; the Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Dr Ahmed bin Hassan Al Hammadi; and the Assistant Minister of State for Defence Affairs, Major General (Pilot) Abdulla Jamman Al-Hamad, to discuss matters related to the Chemical Weapons Convention and the OPCW.
185. During my recent bilateral visit to Poland, I gave a speech at the Warsaw University of Technology and met, *inter alia*, with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr Witold Waszczykowski.
186. The Deputy Director-General addressed the opening plenary of the Global Summit on Chemical Safety and Security, held in Poland in April, and met with the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Ms Joanna Wronecka, as well as other senior government officials. One month later, in June, the Deputy Director-General opened the "Seminar on Chemical Trade: Current Practices and Challenges", which was held in China, and met with senior officials, including the Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr Kong Xuanyou. Later that month, the Deputy Director-General attended the United Nations open consultations on the 2016 Comprehensive Review of resolution 1540 (2004). While in New York, he also met with the Chargé d'Affaires of South Sudan to the United Nations regarding the country's efforts to join the Convention.
187. The Deputy Director-General also received delegations at OPCW Headquarters, namely, a judiciary delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran in February, and the Parliamentary Select Committee on Foreign Affairs of Ghana in August.
188. In November, the Deputy Director-General, furthermore, led an annual briefing for Permanent Representations based outside The Hague in Brussels, Belgium. Twenty-three representatives from 17 countries attended the briefing, which covered matters relating to the Twenty-First Session of the Conference.
189. On 5 September, the OPCW hosted the United Nations Disarmament Fellowship Programme for a day of briefings and a visit to the Equipment Store and Laboratory in Rijswijk. This year, the programme was attended by 28 fellows, including a representative from Egypt.

190. On 28 September, the 16th induction workshop for diplomatic personnel was held at the OPCW. The workshop was attended by 60 representatives of 51 countries, including representatives of Israel and South Sudan.
191. Over the course of the year, an increasing public interest in the Convention and the OPCW's work was evident from the number of public visits received at OPCW Headquarters. In 2016, 57 presentations were delivered to nearly 1,300 visitors at OPCW Headquarters.

OPCW Day 2016

192. The OPCW celebrated its nineteenth anniversary from 2 to 4 May by commemorating, for the first time, the International Day for the Foundation of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons—now known as OPCW Day. The centrepiece of this event was the conference “Chemical Safety and Security in a Technologically Evolving World”, which attracted over 200 experts, officials, practitioners, scientists, educators, and students from across the globe, including a Nobel Prize Laureate for Chemistry. In addition to its interactive format, the conference featured a poster session.

OPCW-The Hague Award

193. Following the outcome of the evaluation by the selection panel of the nominations for the third round of the OPCW-The Hague Award, the panel concluded that the number of nominations has been limited. The nominations had closed on 30 September 2016. In view of the foregoing, it has been agreed by the panel that no awardees should be selected for 2016. Consideration should be given to revisiting the eligibility and selection criteria for the award, with a view to attracting a wider range of nominations. The Technical Secretariat will develop a number of proposals in this regard.

Public affairs

194. During the celebration of OPCW Day, the premiere of the film “Combustion Man” took place. This film—the fourth edition in the OPCW's FIRES documentary film project—brings to life the theme of “science for peace” through its portrayal of a researcher at the University of Central Florida in the United States of America, whose work may one day render much safer the methods of eliminating chemical weapons. Furthermore, a multimedia campaign called #CatalystForPeace was introduced during the symposium on women in chemistry in May. Through photos and short video coverage distributed via social media, it featured representatives from the Technical Secretariat, States Parties, industry, and other stakeholders.
195. As mentioned earlier, the OPCW opened its doors on 25 September to more than 600 people for The Hague International Open Day. Visitors explored points of interest within OPCW Headquarters and took part in activities such as handling chemical weapons detection equipment, trying on inspection gear, contributing to social media campaigns (#ChemicalHero, #OpenDayOPCW), and learning about the Nobel Peace Prize. With support provided by the European Union, the Open Day included a mini-film festival featuring the four films from the OPCW's short documentary FIRES film series.

196. Items on the OPCW agenda remain headline-makers. The OPCW had received 16,769 media citations as at mid-November 2016, which is an increase of 13% from the 14,887 citations at the same point in 2015.
197. The Technical Secretariat facilitated strategic communications among the partner countries for the Libya operation. The two tweets announcing the removal of Libya's remaining chemical materials and their safe arrival in Germany were among the most popular this year.
198. The Technical Secretariat's digital communications capacity has measurably increased according to metrics for both the official website (www.opcw.org) and social media platforms. Traffic to the website increased by five percent as compared to 2015, with approximately 392,000 visitors to the website in 2016. As I mentioned previously, an overhaul of the official website, including the hosting platform, front-end design, and user experience, as well as the back-end content management system, is under way with the launch expected by mid-2017. A short survey, reflecting inputs from members of the ABEO, has been developed to solicit insights from States Parties and other stakeholders about requirements for the new website. This is a suitable opportunity to provide input and participation is strongly encouraged.
199. Analytical tools have been implemented to improve the tracking and measuring of the results of digital communications strategies. Analytics enable data-driven decision-making for assisting with targeted use of limited resources, especially across social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook Live, and YouTube. In line with the recommendation by the Third Review Conference to improve interaction with civil society organisations engaged in issues relevant to the Convention, the OPCW continues to attract high levels of participation by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the annual sessions of the Conference of the States Parties. Fifty-seven NGOs were approved to participate in this Twenty-First Session, which will include a special plenary sitting for NGOs to address delegates, as well as a number of NGO side events and exhibits. To facilitate participation by NGOs from developing and transitioning economies in OCPW activities, 20% of the registered NGOs are able to attend the session thanks to support from European Union funds provided to the OPCW for this purpose.
200. The OPCW continues its long-standing cooperation with the T.M.C. Asser Institute's Summer Programme on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction in a Changing World. The eighth edition successfully concluded on 9 September, with 23 officials, including new OPCW delegates, scientists, researchers, and NGO representatives, benefiting from this week-long training course implemented with OPCW support.

Administrative and financial matters

201. There still remain unpaid outstanding assessed contributions for 2015 and 2016. As at 17 November 2016, the collection level for 2016 assessed contributions stood at 92.2%, compared to 94.8% on the same date last year for assessed contributions for the year 2015. As at the same date, the collection level for 2015 assessed contributions had increased to 95.7%. One State Party has total outstanding assessed

- contributions of EUR 4.4 million for 2015 and 2016. As it stands, funds that have not been received for the 2015 and 2016 assessed contributions cannot be utilised. I urge States Parties that have not paid their outstanding contributions to do so at the earliest and in full.
202. The Organisation has incurred significant costs in undertaking inspections under Articles IV and V of the Convention. Although such costs have been invoiced to States Parties in 2014, 2015, and 2016, as at 17 November 2016, invoices for EUR 4.5 million remained unpaid by two States Parties. Again, I urge payment of these invoices at the earliest and in full.
203. With an increase in unreimbursed Article IV and V verification costs and a considerable level of implementation activities in 2015, the Secretariat borrowed EUR 7.1 million from the Working Capital Fund and the special ERP fund, of which EUR four million has been repaid to the Working Capital Fund in 2016, in line with the Financial Regulations and Rules.
204. Unpaid assessed contributions and unreimbursed Article IV and V verification costs continue to create financial challenges. As you will note from the monthly financial situation report as at 31 October 2016 (S/1434/2016, dated 9 November 2016), the Secretariat may need to withdraw an additional EUR 2.7 million from the Working Capital Fund before the end of 2016, unless all outstanding contributions are made by States Parties. The Secretariat is taking measures to address the financial situation. These include reminding States Parties of their financial obligations, closely monitoring the implementation of the 2016 Programme and Budget, requesting the augmentation of the Working Capital Fund, and using trust fund resources where available. Such measures are supported by the External Auditor in his report on the 2015 Financial Statements (EC-83/DG.1 C-21/DG.5, dated 8 August 2016).
205. I have continued to encourage States Parties in arrears that have lost their voting rights to consider entering into multi-year payment plans to settle their outstanding unpaid assessed contributions. Unfortunately, for the past four years no States Parties have submitted to the Technical Secretariat a request for a multi-year payment plan.
206. As for the next financial year, once the Conference approves the proposed Programme and Budget for 2017, the Technical Secretariat will send 192 individual assessment letters to request each State Party to pay its share of the assessed contributions. In view of the urgency of the Organisation's present cash situation, States Parties are encouraged to pay their 2017 assessed contributions on time and in full, in line with the requirements of the Convention and the Financial Regulations and Rules of the Organisation.
207. This year, the Secretariat has continued to follow the International Public Sector Accounting Standards to record financial transactions and produce Financial Statements. The External Auditor has issued an unqualified audit opinion on the OPCW's Financial Statements for the period ending 31 December 2015 (EC-83/DG.1 C-21/DG.5). I would like to thank the National Audit Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for the professionalism and cooperation demonstrated in the first year of its new mandate as External Auditor.

208. The Secretariat proposes to extend the special fund for OPCW special missions for one further year, without replenishment, as set out in the draft decision on this subject (C-21/DEC/CRP.4, dated 7 November 2016) currently before the Conference.
209. In the past year, the Technical Secretariat has reported to the United Nations on its 2015 greenhouse gas emissions, made efforts to reduce its emissions, and has offset those emissions that are unavoidable, leading to the OPCW being declared a United Nations climate-neutral organisation in the “Greening the Blue” report 2016. The United Nations General Assembly has approved a revised compensation package for the Professional and Higher Categories of the United Nations Common System. As the OPCW aligns the majority of compensation elements to those of the United Nations Common System, the Secretariat is currently evaluating the regulatory and financial implications of the adaptation of these provisions to the OPCW remuneration context and will present the proposal for their implementation. The proposal and amendments will be presented to the Advisory Board on Administrative and Financial matters in June 2017, followed by the Executive Council’s consideration of the matter in July and the final decision and adoption by the Conference of the States Parties at next year’s session.

Office of Internal Oversight

210. Throughout 2016, improvements to the Quality Management System were made possible thanks to enhanced day-to-day cooperation between the OPCW Laboratory and the Office of Internal Oversight (OIO).
211. Over this year, the OIO has carried out six internal audits of activities related to accreditation of both the Laboratory and the OIO. The Dutch Accreditation Council conducted its annual reassessment visit last October, during which the high quality of work performed under ISO⁸ standards was confirmed. This year, for the first time, the OIO also audited the management of biomedical proficiency tests, for which the Laboratory plans to extend the scope of accreditation in the first half of 2017.
212. From 29 August to 1 September 2017, the OPCW will host the United Nations Representatives of Internal Audit Services meeting. This event will strengthen internal auditing practices by providing a forum for the development of auditing methods through innovation and shared best practices.
213. I have continued to closely monitor the status of the implementation of all recommendations contained in OIO reports and remain committed to ensuring that their fulfilment will support the efficiency and effectiveness of the Technical Secretariat’s practices and its full compliance with the Organisation’s regulations and rules.

--- 0 ---

⁸

ISO = International Standardization Organization.