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REGIONAL SEMINAR TO PROMOTE AND FACILITATE RATIFICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION IN STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN, 15 – 16 APRIL 1998

1. Wishing to assist in universalising the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden hosted a regional seminar for the Baltic States, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, and Ukraine which took place in Stockholm 15 to 16 April 1998. Participants had been invited from National Authorities, ministries or governmental offices which have a decisive role in the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention in their respective countries. The purpose of the seminar was to provide the participants with information that could assist them in the implementation of the undertakings under the Convention. It also intended to provide a forum for the exchange of experience gained and for discussion of practical ways to solve the many tasks facing a newly established National Authority.
2. The seminar was organised in co-operation with the Swedish National Authority and the Defence Research Establishment and with active support from the OPCW. In addition, representatives from the National Authorities of Denmark, Finland and Norway attending the seminar, shared their experience with regard to preparations for entry into force and the early stages of implementation of the convention.
3. In his opening remarks, Ambassador Johan Nordenfelt stressed the importance Sweden attaches to a universal adherence to the Chemical Weapons Convention, including the realisation of its objectives also in its own geopolitical area. The Convention, calling for the elimination of a whole class of weapons of mass-destruction under a unique verification regime, provides an effective instrument for building confidence and increased security to all States Parties. Its ground-breaking verification regime will serve as a model for future disarmament treaties and the Convention will be a useful basis for peaceful co-operation in the field of chemical technology.

4. Mr Hassan Mashhadi, Head of the Emergency Assistance Branch of the OPCW, introduced the Chemical Weapons Convention, including provisions for assistance and co-operation under the Convention. He also provided very useful guidance relating to setting up a National Authority and an overview of its tasks. This was followed by a presentation of the Swedish National Authority by its director, Ms Anmmarie Lau-Eriksson. The obligations of a State Party and the national legislation

needed to implement the Convention and to fulfil its obligations were presented by Ms Lisa Tabassi from the Legal Division of the OPCW. Mr Bertil Ahnborg from the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Mr Klaus Spöhr from the Danish National Authority gave presentations on how, in practical terms, the legislative requirements had been fulfilled in their respective countries.

5. On the second day Dr Johan Santesson, Head of the Assistance and Protection Branch of the OPCW, accounted for the different declaration requirements under the Convention and gave insightful practical advice on how to identify declarable activities and to carry out the collection of the data required. Mr Harald Schötz from the Norwegian National Authority made a helpful presentation based on practical experience on collecting and processing data for chemical industry declarations. The importance of the good working relationship that had been established between the Swedish National Authority and the chemical industry in Sweden was stressed by Mr Owe Fredholm, President of the Association of Swedish Chemical Industries. Sharing her experience in connection with routine inspections at schedule 1 and 2 facilities, Dr Britt Malmelin from VERIFIN, which also serves as the Finnish National Authority, made a presentation on the requirements of receiving and cooperating effectively with OPCW inspection teams and the substantial amount of planning needed in this context. Dr Per Runn from the Defence Research Establishment of Sweden concluded the presentations by giving an overview of the regime for Challenge Inspections.
6. Throughout the seminar all participants exchanged views on different aspects of the implementation and had the opportunity to present and discuss specific subjects that had arisen in their own work. It is hoped that the seminar will also serve as a basis for a continued exchange of practical experience and support between the participants representing National Authorities in the region.