



## REPORT OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY BOARD

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Scientific Advisory Board (hereinafter referred to as the "Board"), appointed by the Director-General in accordance with paragraph 45 of Article VIII of the Convention, held its inaugural meeting in The Hague from 21 to 25 September 1998.
- 1.2 Following a recommendation by the Director-General, the Board elected by acclamation Dr Claude Eon of France as its Chairman.
- 1.3 The Board elected by acclamation Dr Will Carpenter of the United States of America as its Vice Chairman.
- 1.4 The Board considered the following issues:
  - (a) the Board's terms of reference (C-II/DEC.10, dated 5 December 1997);
  - (b) the draft interim rules of procedure of the Board;
  - (c) the work programme and the first issues submitted to the Board by the Director-General for its consideration.

### 2. Terms of reference and rules of procedure

- 2.1 The Board discussed its terms of reference, as adopted by the Conference of the States Parties. It noted with concern that the decision on these terms of reference did not include any budgetary provision for the work of the temporary working groups of the Board, nor for any meetings of the Board other than its annual meetings. The members concluded that this lack of budgetary provision is likely to complicate considerably the practical work of the Board and of its temporary working groups, and could also exclude the participation of some of its members or other experts from States Parties in its work.

- 2.2 In this context, the Board also discussed the desired frequency of its meetings, and concluded that one meeting per year would not be sufficient. Two or three meetings per year would probably be required to enable the Board to provide an effective and scientifically sound service to the Organisation.
- 2.3 The members discussed in detail the draft interim rules of procedure submitted by the Director-General to the Board for comment. A number of comments were passed to the Director-General who, as the Board understood, will study them and on that basis will finalise and promulgate the rules of procedure for the Board and notify the Executive Council accordingly. The Board further understood that these rules of procedure will be reviewed at a later date to take account of the practical experience gained by the Board in the course of its work.
- 2.4 The Board members also received a briefing on the OPCW's confidentiality procedures.
- 2.5 The Board discussed its relationship to the temporary working groups to be established by the Director-General, and concluded that any report prepared by a temporary working group on behalf of the Board must first be reviewed by all members of the Board, who might add their comments to it, before it is submitted to the Director-General.

### **3. Work on substantive issues**

- 3.1 The Board discussed the issue of transfers of saxitoxin, which was brought to its attention by the Director-General. In this respect, the Board had the benefit of attending part of the proceedings of a seminar on saxitoxin held by the OPCW in The Hague from 23 to 24 September 1998. On the basis of the information obtained from that meeting and a discussion of the issue, the Board concluded that:
  - (a) the uses of saxitoxin for paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP) monitoring and for research purposes are legitimate;
  - (b) these uses of saxitoxin are important in relation to safeguarding public health;
  - (c) at this stage there are no scientific problems that need to be addressed. The quantities of saxitoxin to be transferred pose no threat to the Convention, but an acceptable solution must be found by the appropriate organ of the OPCW as a matter of urgency; and
  - (d) high-performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) should be considered as one of several future alternatives to the techniques that are currently being used for PSP monitoring. If HPLC is internationally validated and approved for this purpose, and the regulatory adjustments that will be necessary to introduce this method as a regulatory test are made, the need for transfers of saxitoxin would be reduced.

- 3.2 In accordance with Conference decision C-II/DEC.5, dated 5 December 1997, the Board received a request from the Director-General to consider the scientific and technical aspects of reporting of ricin production, and to prepare a report on this issue within six months. After an initial discussion of some of the issues involved, the Board decided to request the Director-General to establish a temporary working group, under the chairmanship of Dr Thomas Inch of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, to address this issue and to prepare a report on behalf of the Board by April 1999.
- 3.3 The Board also received a request from the Director-General to address the issue of the OPCW's analytical procedures and capabilities for verification purposes. The Board decided to request the Director-General to establish a temporary working group, under the chairmanship of Dr Marjatta Rautio of Finland, to address this and other issues related to verification methodologies and emerging technologies, and to prepare a first report by April 1999. The Board noted that the symposium on the designation of laboratories by the OPCW, organised jointly by the Secretariat and Singapore, scheduled for 1 December 1998, preceding the First Singapore International Symposium on Protection Against Toxic Chemicals (1st SISPAT), could provide a useful framework for starting the work to address these issues.
- 3.4 The Board further received a request from the Director-General to address the issue of the requirements and specifications for on-site monitoring equipment. The Board decided to request the Director-General to establish a temporary working group, under the chairmanship of Professor Gerhard Matz of Germany, to address this and other issues related to inspection equipment, as well as verification methodologies and emerging technologies, and to prepare a first report by April 1999.
- 3.5 The Board further decided to request the Director-General to establish a temporary working group on the issues related to technologies for the destruction of chemical weapons. In this context, the working group should also take into account and consider environmental concerns, historical and munitions aspects of chemical weapons, and relevant developments in chemical industry. The Board recommended that Dr Giorgio Modena of Italy be designated as the chairman of this working group.
- 3.6 The Board agreed that it will keep the issue of developments in science and technology relevant to the Convention, including work on a database on toxic chemicals, as a standing item on the agendas of its future meetings.

#### **4. Closure**

- 4.1 The Board agreed to convene its next (three-day) meeting during the period 5 - 16 April 1999.
- 4.2 The meeting was closed on 25 September 1998.

Annex: First session of the Scientific Advisory Board: list of participants

**Annex**

**FIRST SESSION OF THE SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY BOARD  
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

<b>Will D. Carpenter</b>	USA
<b>Claudio Costa Neto</b>	Brazil
<b>A.K. Datta</b>	India
<b>Claude Eon</b>	France
<b>Alfred Frey</b>	Switzerland
<b>Shintaro Furusaki</b>	Japan
<b>Tom. D. Inch</b>	UK
<b>Li Weimin</b>	China
<b>Consuelo Lopez-Zumel</b>	Spain
<b>Gerhard Matz</b>	Germany
<b>Brahim Youcef Meklati</b>	Algeria
<b>Giorgio Mondena</b>	Italy
<b>Viktor Alkesevits Petrunin</b>	Russia
<b>Erno Pungör</b>	Hungary
<b>Marjatta Rautio</b>	Finland
<b>Stanislaw Witek</b>	Poland
<b>Burkhard Seeger</b>	Chile
<b>Abbas Shafiee</b>	Iran
<b>Theodoros Solomon</b>	Ethiopia
<b>Branko Stanovnik</b>	Slovenia

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