

Opening statement to the Twenty-Second Session of the OPCW's Scientific Advisory Board, 8 June 2015 – delivered by the Deputy Director-General

Distinguished members of the Scientific Advisory Board,

1. On behalf of the Director-General, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the Twenty-Second Session of the Scientific Advisory Board.
2. I would like to congratulate the new Chairperson, Dr. Christopher Timperley, and Vice-Chairperson, Mr. Cheng Tang, on their election to these positions and wish them every success in all their endeavours to serve the SAB and the OPCW. I would also like to thank the outgoing Chairperson, Professor Alejandra Suárez, for her leadership and contribution to the SAB.

Mr Chairperson,

3. Science and technology are ingrained in the Chemical Weapons Convention. Developments in science and technology are to be closely followed in order to ensure the continued relevance and success of the Chemical Weapons Convention. It is especially important now that the OPCW is at the onset of the post-destruction phase, which triggers a period of change and transition. In March this year, the Director-General issued a paper entitled “The OPCW in 2025: Ensuring a World Free of Chemical Weapons”, which may be helpful in understanding the future focus of the Organisation.
4. During this session of the SAB you will be reviewing the work of the temporary working groups on education and outreach and on verification. On behalf of the Director-General, I thank the chairpersons of the two current temporary working groups – Professor Djafer Benachour and Professor Roberto Martínez-Álvarez – as well as all the other SAB members involved in these TWGs, for taking on the additional responsibility and for their hard work.
5. The temporary working group on education and outreach held its final meeting last year. In consultation with the SAB Chairperson, the Director-General released an advance copy of its final report at the time of the annual meeting of National Authorities last November.
6. To give further momentum to practical action, the Director-General is intending to establish the proposed Advisory Board on Education and Outreach, made up of external experts, in 2016. The necessary information

related to the establishment of this advisory body will be presented to the Conference of the States Parties through the Executive Council session to be held in July for its consideration and approval, in addition to the draft Programme and Budget for 2016.

7. Activities are taking place in relation to the promotion of education and outreach, focusing especially on concept development and region-specific, tailor-made approaches. Once the advisory body is established, the work in the field of the promotion of education and outreach will be more streamlined and organised, in accordance with the expert advice provided by the advisory body, with the long-term perspective of creating an informed community, as well as a community of partners to achieve the objectives of the Convention.
8. The temporary working group on verification held its sixth and final meeting last month and has produced a substantive final report. The Secretariat will publish and disseminate this report after the SAB has considered it. Your recommendations will inform our work to further strengthen and refine the verification regime, which is the cornerstone of the Chemical Weapons Convention. It is particularly important for us to strengthen the industry verification regime at this stage of implementation of the Convention, as it is one of the important tools for the prevention of re-emergence.
9. Furthermore, the Director-General has released your second report on medical counter-measures and treatment of organophosphorous nerve-agent exposure as a SAB working paper. I thank in particular Professor Slavica Vučinić for leading this work.
10. The monitoring of developments in science and technology undertaken by the SAB and the Secretariat has identified areas for further analysis, including chemical-analysis methods and isotopic labeling of scheduled chemicals. You will be discussing these and other developments during the course of this week.

Distinguished members of the SAB,

11. I am glad to see that you continue to engage with experts from across the world. On its part, the Secretariat, the Science Policy Adviser, and other relevant officers have also been in close interaction with the scientific and industry communities and have participated in various international forums, contributing actively to promote our ultimate objectives of disarmament of chemical weapons, prevention of re-emergence, and peaceful uses of chemistry.

12. Furthermore, the Secretariat is expanding its outreach on science and technology with publications, including *OPCW Today*. The August issue of *OPCW Today* was dedicated to science and technology. Additionally, the Secretariat has created a special science-and-technology section on the OPCW's public website and initiated a science-and-technology newsletter for Secretariat staff members, SAB members, and interested external stakeholders on developments and trends identified through the Secretariat's science-and-technology monitoring activities.
13. Through all these efforts, the OPCW is becoming more active and visible in the global scientific community. This is evidenced by the award from the American Chemical Society, presented to the Director-General in March this year, in recognition of the promotion of chemistry in the service of peace.
14. Given the high visibility of our science-based activities, I am pleased that the SAB continues to brief States Parties on its work and on that of its temporary working groups. This interaction is greatly important, as it serves to enhance the understanding of science and technology while making policies and decisions.
15. Since the middle of last year, the Secretariat has complemented this interaction with a series of workshops called "Science for Diplomats". Four of these workshops have been held since last year's SAB session, addressing sampling and analysis, biomedical sample analysis, the science of the bio economy, and Schedule 1 chemicals in industrial processes. "Science for Diplomats" provides a forum in which delegates can engage scientists and inform policy-making with a sound scientific and technical foundation. The next workshop will take place in the margins of the next session of the Executive Council in July, where we will discuss the science of medical countermeasures.
16. I would like to thank the six members of the SAB who are completing their second and final term on the Board later this year for their remarkable contributions and expert advice towards implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the work of the OPCW. We are especially grateful to Professor Suárez for having served as Chairperson of the SAB – ably steering the Board's production of three substantive reports, on the convergence of chemistry and biology, on education and outreach, and on verification.
17. You have all served the SAB with devotion and distinction. I wish you continued success in your current and future endeavours: I have every

confidence that you will continue to contribute to our common goal of a world free of chemical weapons.

Distinguished members of the SAB,

18. The Scientific Advisory Board represents a wealth of experience and scientific expertise, and the OPCW can only benefit from your contributions. Your continued expert advice to the OPCW in the post-destruction phase and for heightened non-proliferation efforts in the future will be more vital than before.
19. We greatly appreciate the dedication that you bring to your mission and to your work in this important body. The expertise each one of you offers is crucial for ensuring the continued success and relevance of the Chemical Weapons Convention and its verification regime.
20. I wish you a successful session.