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IRAQ

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE PREPARATION OF THE DESTRUCTION PLAN FOR THE AI MUTHANNA BUNKERS

Background

1. Iraq is fully committed to the goals and objectives of the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter “the Convention”) and has been doing its utmost to meet its obligations under the Convention. Iraq cooperates effectively with the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW (hereinafter “the Secretariat”) and States Parties to fulfil its commitments under the Convention.
2. In accordance with Article III of the Convention and Part IV(A) of the Verification Annex to the Convention (hereinafter “the Verification Annex”), Iraq declared that the Category 1 chemical weapons it possessed were remnants—a result of 1991 military operations; in addition, this State Party committed to submit the general plan for the destruction of those chemical weapons to the Secretariat as soon as possible.
3. Iraq, since June 2009 (the date that it submitted its initial declaration to the Secretariat), has been taking all necessary measures to facilitate the prompt destruction of these remnants of chemical weapons as quickly as possible, in compliance with paragraph 8 of Article IV of the Convention.
4. During the Sixty-Seventh Session of the Executive Council (hereinafter “the Council”), held from 14 to 17 February 2012 in The Hague, Iraq distributed a national paper (EC-67/NAT.10, dated 13 February 2012 and EC-67/NAT.10/Corr.1, dated 15 February 2012), which details its approach towards the destruction of the contents of the Al Muthanna bunkers. The national paper submitted by Iraq underlines the explosive, chemical, and physical hazards that would be associated with the entry into the bunkers.
5. Iraq clarifies in the above-mentioned national paper that the approach Iraq will take for the destruction of these remnants is the result of various meetings and consultations that have been carried out with the interested States Parties and the Secretariat. The latest meeting took place in November 2011, and consisted of a roundtable discussion hosted by the United States of America in Aberdeen, Maryland, with the participation of 38 experts representing Iraq, Germany, United Kingdom, United States of America and the Secretariat. All experts present during the roundtable agreed that bunker 13 at Al Muthanna represents a special case and that an entry into the bunker would expose personnel to explosive, chemical, and physical



hazards. The potential for an explosion occurring is the most serious factor due to the presence of scattered fuzes and warhead components, the condition of which is largely unknown and which, it is assumed, could not be safely moved. Irreversibly encapsulating in concrete the remnants of chemical weapons in bunker 13 by filling the bunker with self-consolidating (“liquid”) concrete (referred to as “encapsulation”) represents, in Iraq’s view, the safest approach for destruction which would pose the lowest risk to the safety of the personnel involved in the process and to the environment.

Progress on the preparation of the destruction plan approach for Al Muthanna bunkers

6. Further to that, the Iraqi authorities are interested in informing the Council of the progress that has been made during the intersessional period (from February to 30 April 2012) at the national level towards the disposal of the remnants of chemical weapons at the Al Muthanna site, in particular those in bunkers 13 and 41, which have involved a number of measures and activities, which are as follows:

- (a) A Committee headed by the Minister of Science and Technology has been appointed to oversee the implementation of the Al-Muthanna Bunkers Decommissioning Project. The Committee’s Manager and his deputies have been nominated. The project financial allocations have been approved at a level of about USD 55 million.
- (b) The schedule of working phases by which it is proposed that project implementation will take place has been prepared.
- (c) Project working groups have been designated, in accordance with areas of specialisation.
- (d) The Project plan management has been prepared, and we are starting to implement the detailed plan according to the relevant standards, including work break-down structure (WBS). An organisational structure for the implementation of the project has been prepared.
- (e) The time schedule for work implementation has been specified. An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) has been prepared which is in accordance with international standards and Iraqi environmental regulations; in addition a report has been prepared which describes the Iraqi environmental instructions and limitations.
- (f) The air composition assessment and process design for gases inside the bunkers (13, 41) has been prepared according to the Iraqi Proposed Plan.

Site construction work has been executed and is as follows:

- (i) the administration centre of the site.
- (ii) the field laboratory.
- (iii) the medical centre.

- (iv) the security office.
 - (v) the maintenance workshop.
 - (vi) stores.
- (g) The workers residential camp has been built and furnished in a place located about 17 km away from the working site, and can accommodate 100 persons, with the possibility of further increasing this capacity in the future if necessary.
- (h) The camp security fence monitoring towers and guards points were distributed according to the security plan.
- (i) A preliminary risk analysis is prepared.
 - (j) A safety and emergency plan is prepared.
 - (k) A security plan has been put into place.
 - (l) The samples analysis and the quality control plan are prepared.
 - (m) The medical care and the decontamination plan are prepared.
- (n) Ground water flow direction and level, earth topography and wind direction, essential in the identification of the location of the destruction units, have been determined.
- (o) An environmental initial survey for the site and the area around the bunkers was conducted to define the environmental risks.
- (p) Machinery and appliances, representing 45% of the project needs, have been purchased:
- (i) Trucks, pickup, minibus, forklift, tractors, ambulances, etc.
 - (ii) Different sizes of tanks for the assessment system, with a capacity of 50 to 100 m³.
 - (iii) 90% of the maintenance workshops.
 - (iv) Chemicals for decontamination.
 - (v) 70% of the field laboratory equipment.
 - (vi) Power generator and water station were installed.
7. A preliminary plan for destruction has been proposed and will be developed according to the assessment results.

8. Numerous technical meetings have been taking place in support of launching and implementing the project:

- (a) Several significant technical meetings with specialised entities were held sequentially which has contributed to the development of the Iraqi proposal for the remediation of bunkers 13 and 41.
- (b) Technical meetings with different delegations of the States Parties were held in the margins of the Sixty-Seventh Session of the Council, namely: the United States, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, Germany, mostly with participation from the Secretariat.
- (c) Many research and study contracts have been signed with Iraqi institutions and universities concerning the type of concrete and additives, geological layers, risk mitigation, and soil analysis.

Next steps

9. As further steps, Iraq plans to:

- (a) Conduct a detailed risk assessment of breaching bunker 13;
 - (b) Implement the assessment stage. Iraq anticipates that the selection of the destruction technology will be completed following the consideration of the results of the assessment phase;
 - (c) Prepare and submit to the Council the general plan for destruction of the remnants of the chemical weapons as required under Article III, paragraph 1 (a)(v), including the proposed order of destruction and destruction technology, to allow the Council take a decision on the order of destruction as provided for in paragraph 8 of Article IV of the Convention;
 - (d) Prepare and submit to the Secretariat the detailed facility information (DFI) in accordance with paragraphs 30 to 32 of Part IV(A) of the Verification Annex;
 - (e) Train the workers in different levels and specialisations.
10. Iraq will work to complete the preliminary aforementioned steps. In this regard, Iraq is looking forward to the continued support and cooperation of interested States Parties.