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OPENING STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AT ITS SEVENTY-FOURTH SESSION

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

1. I welcome you all to the Seventy-Fourth Session of the Executive Council.
2. As you are aware, the Technical Secretariat has been focusing on the implementation of the historic decision of the Executive Council on the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons (EC-M-33/DEC.1, dated 27 September 2013).
3. I can already report some positive developments since the arrival of an OPCW team in Damascus on 30 September.
4. On 4 October, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted additional information updating its initial disclosure. This information draws in part on technical assistance provided by the OPCW team, and will help the Secretariat to plan its future activities. Syria has also nominated a national focal point in accordance with the Executive Council decision.
5. On 6 October, the first verification visit took place. Under the verification of OPCW experts supported by the United Nations, Syria began to destroy its chemical weapons. Syrian personnel used cutting torches and angle grinders to destroy or disable a range of materials, including missile warheads, aerial bombs, and mixing and filling equipment. The goal remains to render unusable all production facilities, as well as mixing and filling equipment, by 1 November.
6. These developments present a constructive beginning for what will nonetheless be a long and difficult process. To ensure ongoing monitoring of this process, a second team of 12 OPCW inspectors has now departed for Cyprus and will deploy to Damascus via Beirut on 9 October. I wish to thank the Government of Italy for providing transportation.
7. I have made no secret of the fact that the mission in the Syrian Arab Republic will present multiple challenges – most immediately, in relation to the safety and security of our inspectors. The ongoing conflict will also test the implementation timeframes set by the Council decision. Addressing these challenges will require a major cooperative effort. I urge all States Parties to make appropriate demarches to relevant parties to assist this effort.



8. The Secretary-General of the United Nations has submitted to the Security Council his recommendations with regard to the United Nations' role in this mission yesterday. This letter will be available in the course of today. I will shortly sign a supplementary agreement between the OPCW and the United Nations to facilitate the provision of security and field and logistics support by the United Nations for the joint OPCW-UN mission.
9. In accordance with the Executive Council decision, I will report to the Council every month on progress towards implementation of the decision on Syrian chemical weapons. I also undertake to brief the Council outside of these regular updates, should developments on the ground require. I note, in this respect, that I briefed the Council on 3 October and that the Secretariat held an initial briefing for States Parties on 2 October.
10. The unprecedented challenges posed by this mission and its scope will require additional budgetary resources and voluntary contributions from States Parties. The Secretariat will revise the Draft Programme and Budget for 2014 (EC-74/CRP.1, dated 12 July 2013), as the demands of Syria-related activities become clearer, and present it for deliberation in budget facilitations over the coming weeks.
11. I wish to thank States Parties for their generous contributions and offers of assistance to date.
12. Two teams of OPCW inspectors have so far participated in the United Nations Mission to Investigate Alleged Uses of Chemical Weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic: from 18 to 31 August, and from 24 to 30 September. The mission has so far reported to the United Nations Secretary-General that chemical weapons had been used on 21 August in the Damascus suburb of Ghouta. The United Nations Mission Head, Professor Sellström, is planning to issue a final report to the Secretary-General by the end of October. I wish to thank the Governments of Germany and the Netherlands for their generous support in assisting with the transportation of the team.
13. At the invitation of China and Japan, I accompanied the Council on a visit to China from 9 to 13 September, which included a visit to the Haerbaling destruction site for chemical weapons abandoned by Japan on the territory of China. The delegation noted progress made at the site, despite complex, and at times hazardous, technical challenges posed by the recovery, identification, and destruction of abandoned chemical weapons (ACWs). I commend the Governments of China and Japan on their ongoing joint efforts to destroy ACWs in China.
14. The Secretariat has completed its planned initial development of e-learning modules, covering basic implementation aspects of the Convention. The first six modules in English are now available on the OPCW website for use by Member States and others. Translations into the five other official languages of the OPCW are under way on the basis of funding provided by the European Union.
15. I regret that the international conference planned for October, "The Chemical Weapons Convention: Its contribution to disarmament and the future of the regime," had to be postponed, owing to demands related to the mission in the Syrian Arab Republic.

16. The Director of Administration will deliver a presentation on OPCW recruitment procedures on 9 October in response to questions raised by several States Parties at the previous session of the Executive Council.
17. I now turn to my customary report on the activities of the Secretariat in the period since the last session of the Council. I will mention only the highlights; my detailed statement will be made available to the Council as an official document of this session.

Chemical demilitarisation and verification

18. The destruction of chemical weapons has continued during the intersessional period at four chemical weapons destruction facilities in the Russian Federation, namely, Leonidovka, Maradykovsky, Pochep, and Shchuchye, with agent and munitions changeover subcampaigns at most facilities.
19. Following the completion of the destruction of 500-kg spray tanks and 150-kg aerial bombs, both filled with viscous soman, the facility at Maradykovsky started the destruction of 250-kg aerial bombs, also viscous soman-filled, in August. At the same time, the facility at Pochep initiated the destruction of Vx-filled modules after the completion of the destruction of sarin-filled 250-kg aerial bombs. Also in August, the facility at Shchuchye completed the destruction of soman-filled 220-mm warheads, and started the destruction of two types of soman-filled 152-mm projectiles. The facility at Leonidovka continued the destruction of soman-filled aerial bomb blocks. In September, the Secretariat conducted the final engineering review of the process building designated for the destruction of aerial bomb blocks in Maradykovsky.
20. As at 31 August 2013, the Russian Federation had destroyed 30,402.384 metric tonnes (MTs), or 76.07%, of its total declared amount of Category 1 chemical weapons.
21. The United States of America has informed the Secretariat that it has completed 71% of the construction work for the Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant and has also reached 9% systemisation at this facility. Similarly, the construction work for the major buildings at the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant has been completed and systemisation at this facility has reached 46%. To date, the Secretariat has verified the destruction by the United States of America of 24,923.673 MTs, or 89.75% of its total declared amount of Category 1 chemical weapons.
22. During the period under review, the Secretariat conducted one mission at the converted chemical weapons production facility (CWPF) in the Russian Federation. During the same period, the Secretariat issued the certificate of completion of the conversion of one former CWPF in Novocheboksarsk, also in the Russian Federation.
23. Libya continues to work on the arrangements required to allow the destruction later this year of chemical munitions and sulfur mustard remnants that cannot be disposed of using the hydrolysis and neutralisation system. Thus, the manufacture of the required static detonation chamber (SDC) was recently completed and its shipment is scheduled for the first half of this month, so that it will be installed at the Ruwagha site and prepared for operations by early November. Destruction operations are expected to start immediately thereafter. At the same time, a number of Libyan

engineers and technicians have been trained in Germany and Sweden in areas related to the use of the SDC for destruction of chemical weapons. Moreover, the security and safety equipment provided by the United States of America has been received, pending its use when destruction operations start, and a joint security and safety plan has been developed and is being implemented, with a view to ensuring and fulfilling all requirements in this regard once operations start.

24. During the intersessional period, there were two inspections at abandoned chemical weapons (ACW) sites in China.
25. Pursuant to the Council decision on the final extended deadline of 29 April 2012 (C-16/DEC.11, dated 1 December 2011), China and Japan invited the Council to visit the ACW destruction site at Haerbaling, Jilin Province, China, from 9 to 13 September 2013.
26. The Council delegation noted the continued commitment of Japan as the Abandoning State Party and China as the Territorial State Party to destroying all the ACWs as soon as possible and to meeting their obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention. The delegation acknowledged the technical challenges posed by the recovery, identification, and destruction of the ACWs. The visit provided the delegation with an insight into the complexities and the hazards involved and highlighted the progress made by both sides working towards the destruction of ACWs in China.

Declarations

27. As at 19 September 2013, 179 States Parties had submitted their initial declarations in accordance with Articles III and VI of the Convention. The following declarations are outstanding: Seven States Parties have yet to submit their initial declarations; two States Parties have yet to submit the Article VI part of their initial declarations; and one State Party has yet to submit the Article III part of its initial declaration. The Secretariat continues to work with all States Parties that have yet to submit initial declarations and encourages them to submit any outstanding declarations as soon as possible.
28. As at 19 September, the annual declarations on past activities (ADPA) for 2012 had been submitted by 89 States Parties. These submissions included eight "nil" declarations. Since the last session of the Council, four additional States Parties, namely, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ecuador, Ethiopia, and Panama, have submitted their ADPA for 2012.
29. Since the last session of the Council, bilateral meetings have been held with 26 States Parties on declaration-related issues.
30. One data-reconciliation visit has been held in a State Party in order to clarify outstanding matters related to Article III declarations. Two technical-assistance visits have been conducted in two States Parties in order to clarify outstanding matters related to Article VI declarations. Of the 11 States Parties with long-outstanding declaration issues, four States Parties have submitted the required declarations since the last session of the Council. The Secretariat continues to work with the seven remaining States Parties and with all those States Parties that may require support to improve the timeliness, completeness, and accuracy of their declarations.

Status of implementation of decision C-14/DEC.4, dated 2 December 2009

31. Since the last session of the Council, no States Parties have informed the Secretariat of the status of their implementation of the decision establishing guidelines on low-concentration limits for declarations of Schedule 2A and 2A* chemicals (C-14/DEC.4). In accordance with this decision, the Secretariat is tasked with reporting annually on the status of its implementation in the Verification Implementation Report (VIR). To this end, the Secretariat is undertaking a third survey, which was released prior to this session (S/1125/2013, dated 17 September 2013). I encourage all States Parties that have not previously informed the Secretariat that they have implemented the decision to complete this survey by the deadline of 31 December 2013.

Update of the Declarations Handbook

32. The revised version of the Declarations Handbook is planned to be released by the end of this year. As at 19 September, the Secretariat had received comments from six States Parties, which are being reviewed through bilateral consultations with each of the States Parties in question. The Secretariat will agree on the outcome of this review; this will be incorporated in the next draft of Declarations Handbook, which will be shared amongst all States Parties for comments.

Supplement to the Verification Implementation Report for 2012

33. A supplement to the VIR for 2012 has been issued as EC-74/HP/DG.1 (dated 18 September 2013). The supplement updates both chemical weapons and industry declarations information contained in the VIR. As reported in the supplement, the issue of transfer discrepancies is still outstanding. Repeated transfer discrepancies arose in relation to a number of States Parties, which also have yet to submit declarations of aggregate national data. During the reporting period, two States Parties provided their aggregate national data declarations following bilateral consultations with the Secretariat. Effective control and reporting of the trade in scheduled chemicals is a key element of the verification regime. I invite States Parties to work with the Secretariat and with the other States Parties involved to reconcile any discrepancies.
34. With regard to other chemical production facility (OCPF) updates, it is also important to highlight the need to review and update the lists of OCPFs declared by States Parties. During the reporting period, two States Parties submitted their OCPF updates following bilateral consultations with the Secretariat. Similarly, the Secretariat continues to encourage States Parties to update their entire list of OCPFs on an annual basis.

Electronic declarations

35. The Secretariat continues to work towards the establishment of the "Secure Information Exchange" (SIX) electronic transmission system, which aims at enhancing the efficiency of the information exchange between the Secretariat and States Parties, as well as the timeliness of declarations. The pilot phase of the project,

involving States Parties from various regions, is under way. Discussions with States Parties regarding this project are ongoing in the Industry Cluster.

36. The Secretariat continues to improve the electronic declarations tool for National Authorities (EDNA) based on the feedback received, and continues to provide technical support to States Parties upon request. During the Fifteenth Annual Meeting of National Authorities, scheduled for November, the Secretariat is planning to have a dedicated session on EDNA and the SIX system, to provide training and technical assistance to interested States Parties. The Secretariat also plans to organise a side event on the SIX system during the Eighteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties, as well as dedicated EDNA training sessions at the OPCW Headquarters.

Article VI inspections

37. Article VI inspections are on track, with 229 inspections authorised to be carried out in accordance with the Programme and Budget for 2013 (C-17/DEC.4, dated 27 November 2012). Of these, 11 are planned to be conducted at Schedule 1, 42 at Schedule 2, and 29 at Schedule 3 facilities. By the end of September of this year, a total of 185 inspections had been conducted; of these, 10 were carried out at Schedule 1 facilities; 31 at Schedule 2 facilities, of which six included the use of sampling and analysis; 21 at Schedule 3 facilities; and 123 at OCPFs. This represents 81% of the budgeted inspections for 2013.
38. At the request of Denmark, a technical-assistance visit took place in that country on 9 and 10 September of this year. The visit represented a further measure on the part of Denmark to bring to closure a matter concerning the captive use of Schedule 1 chemicals in pharmaceutical production in that State Party, which had been brought to the attention of the Secretariat in 2010. An update on the actions that the Secretariat has taken since the Seventy-Third Session of the Council is provided in a Note by the Secretariat entitled "Further Update on the Matter Considered by the Executive Council at its Sixty-Third Session under Agenda Subitem 6(i)" (EC-74/S/2, dated 25 September 2013).

Inspectorate training

39. On 29 August, a group of new inspectors arrived at the Secretariat, comprising 16 inspectors of 13 different nationalities. These inspectors, who are expected to be deployed starting in January 2014, are currently undergoing a standard training programme for new inspectors. I thank the governments of Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, Serbia, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for their contribution and support.

OPCW Laboratory

Designated laboratories

40. After the completion of the Thirty-Second and Thirty-Third Proficiency Tests, our network of designated laboratories remains wide at 21 laboratories in 17 Member States. I wish to thank the laboratories for their important contribution to the work of the OPCW. This was particularly evident in the context of the United Nations

Mission to Investigate Alleged Uses of Chemical Weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Knowledge management

41. In the period under review, the Secretariat has improved the concept regarding the knowledge-management capabilities of the Organisation. The new concept was presented on 10 September in the context of the consultations on the Programme and Budget for 2014, and the presentation has been made available on the external server.

Follow-up activities to the Third Review Conference¹

42. The Secretariat provided an update of its analysis of actions to implement the recommendations of the Third Review Conference, which was made available to States Parties on 30 September (EC-74/S/3).

Anti-terrorism

43. Yesterday, the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism held its second meeting in 2013. As anticipated, the working group has revived its practice of inviting experts and representatives from other relevant international organisations and agencies, with Dr Jonathan Lucas, Director of the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), addressing the working group. The OPCW enjoys fruitful interaction with UNICRI, including in the framework of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF), and the visit by Mr Lucas represented an important opportunity for the group to learn more about the relevant activities of UNICRI in the areas of the fight against terrorism and of CBRN² risk mitigation. It also afforded the opportunity to consider possible initiatives on which the two organisations could work together. Together with the facilitator of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism, H.E. Dr Nimota Nihinlola Akanbi of Nigeria, the Secretariat has been working on a schedule for the meeting of the working group in 2014, as well as on topics for discussion. Delegations will be informed about this schedule in due course.
44. As co-Chair of the Working Group on Preventing and Responding to WMD Terrorist Attacks of the CTITF, the Secretariat has developed a proposal for a project to be run by the working group. The proposal has been submitted to its members for their comments and approval. Thereafter, it is envisaged that the CTITF Office will seek funding from United Nations Member States. The project would focus on ensuring effective inter-agency interoperability, as well as coordinated and effective communication in the event of chemical and/or biological attacks.

Engagement with the chemical industry

45. Pursuant to relevant recommendations made by the Third Review Conference, I seek to strengthen the engagement between the OPCW and the chemical industry, with a

¹ Third Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention

² CBRN = chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear

focus on joint practical initiatives related to the implementation of the Convention. Representatives of the Secretariat have met with representatives of the International Council of Chemical Associations (ICCA) in this regard, including on the subjects of outreach and awareness-raising and chemical safety and chemical security. The Secretariat stands ready to facilitate further dialogue in this context, including between representatives of States Parties and the chemical industry.

Science and technology

46. The report of the Twentieth Session of the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB), which met from 10 to 14 June, has been circulated to States Parties, along with my Note on the impact of developments in science and technology in the context of the Convention (EC-74/DG.1, dated 24 July 2013). My Note contains both a response to the report of the Twentieth Session of the SAB and my views on other relevant issues in science and technology.
47. The Secretariat has also been developing further the recommendations that I made to the Third Review Conference in relation to science and technology (RC-3/DG.2, dated 31 January 2013).
48. The temporary working groups of the SAB have continued to hold meetings during the intersessional period.
49. From 23 to 25 September, the temporary working group on verification held its second meeting. The report of their meeting will be made available on the OPCW website as soon as possible.
50. The temporary working group on the convergence of chemistry and biology will hold its fourth and final meeting from 5 to 7 November. Thereafter, the working group will produce a substantive report that summarises its deliberations and sets out recommendations. During the reporting period, members of the SAB have continued to organise side events on this important subject in the margins of meetings of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention. They have also continued to encourage engagement between experts in chemistry and biology in connection with relevant events related to science and technology, including at the Synthetic Biology 6.0 Conference in July, and the 44th IUPAC³ World Chemistry Congress and 15th Asian Chemical Congress in August.
51. The temporary working group on education and outreach in science and technology is scheduled to hold its third meeting from 26 to 29 November. This will provide an occasion to engage with representatives of National Authorities at their annual meeting. The Secretariat has been working with partners to develop and update educational tools and materials for use by educators and students, which are envisaged to be ready for dissemination by 2014, as the year of awareness-raising on the Convention.
52. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge members of the SAB who are leaving the Board this year: Mr Stefan Mogl of Switzerland, Dr Shuzo Fujiwara of Japan, Professor Igor Rybalchenko of the Russian Federation, Dr Devendra Kumar

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IUPAC = International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry

Dubey of India, and Mr Nan Zhang of China. I thank them all for their many years of service and for their significant contributions to the work of the OPCW. I would like to thank Mr Mogl in particular for his able stewardship of the SAB as the Chairperson of the Eighteenth, Nineteenth, and Twentieth Sessions of the SAB, during which, inter alia, the report of the SAB on developments in science and technology was prepared for the Third Review Conference.

53. I have appointed the following new members to the SAB: Dr Veronica Borrett of Australia, Mr Chen Tang of China, Dr S. K. Raza of India, Dr Koji Takeuchi of Japan, and Mr Valentin Rubaylo of the Russian Federation. These appointments will take effect on 1 January 2014.
54. I would like to use this opportunity to express the hope that States Parties will respond favourably to my request for voluntary contributions to the SAB trust fund (S/1119/2013, dated 24 July 2013). States Parties also have the option to make a contribution from their share of the annual budgetary cash surpluses that are otherwise returnable to them following the end of the financial year. The trust fund is an important source of funding for the temporary working groups of the SAB.

International cooperation and assistance

Implementation support

55. During the period under review, the Secretariat conducted two training courses for customs authorities. A subregional training course for States Parties in Central, North, and West Africa was held from 22 to 25 July in Accra, Ghana. From 17 to 19 September, a regional training course for customs authorities in Latin America and the Caribbean was held in Bogotá, Colombia. Both courses provided the participating customs authorities with an in-depth understanding of the technical aspects of the transfers regime of the Convention. As part of the OPCW's collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), a number of UNODC officials took part in the Accra course.
56. The Secretariat held a training course for representatives of National Authorities of States Parties in the GRULAC⁴ region that are involved in fulfilling the Article VI declaration requirements of the Convention. The event was attended by a total of 28 participants. A basic course for National Authority personnel was held at the OPCW Headquarters as part of the continued efforts of the Secretariat to provide assistance and capacity-building support to States Parties. The course was aimed at providing officials who recently joined their National Authorities with an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the provisions of the Convention. The course, which was conducted simultaneously in English and Spanish, attracted 34 participants, representing the National Authorities of 31 States Parties.
57. At the request of Mexico and Colombia, respectively, two one-day national events were organised back to back in August and September respectively with the regional events conducted in that region. The training course for National Authorities of States Parties involved in fulfilling Article VI declaration requirements was followed by a

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GRULAC = Group of Latin American and Caribbean States

one-day seminar for the Mexican chemical-industry association on the declaration requirements of the Convention. A seminar on declaration and inspection requirements under Article VI of the Convention was held in Bogotá following the course for customs officers on the implementation of the transfers regime.

58. Since the last session of the Council, the Secretariat has facilitated two additional mentorships under the National Authority Mentorship Programme. These are between Brazil and Sao Tome and Principe, and Malaysia and Sudan, respectively. The Secretariat has received several expressions of interest in the programme from States Parties, relating to participation both as mentors and mentees. The Secretariat is currently finalising the structures required to institutionalise these requests.
59. During the intersessional period, the Secretariat organised the fourth edition of the internship programme for legal drafters and National Authorities' representatives, from 23 to 27 September. Two States Parties, Dominica and Lebanon, participated in the training. Another three, Ecuador, Guinea Bissau, and Trinidad and Tobago, will take part in the edition scheduled for November.
60. In close collaboration with the National Authority of the Netherlands and the Dutch customs authorities, the Secretariat held a training course for National Authorities last month on how to train escorts for inspections. The course provided participants with an opportunity to clarify issues relating to the conduct of inspections and share their experiences and best practices. Participants also benefitted from a mock inspection conducted at one of the largest propylene oxide and styrene monomer plants in the world, which is based in Rotterdam.
61. At the request of the National Authority of the Philippines, a team from the Secretariat extended a national implementation capacity evaluation visit to Manila on 14 and 15 August. The visit contributed to awareness-raising among the stakeholders of the Philippine National Authority. The Secretariat has recently been informed that, further to the visit, draft bills for implementing legislation have been introduced in both the Congress and the Senate of the Philippines.

Assistance and protection

62. In the area of assistance and protection against chemical weapons, the Secretariat conducted a number of activities aimed at developing and improving the protection capabilities of States Parties in the case of the use or the threat of use of chemical weapons, as well as at maintaining the readiness of the Organisation to respond to a request for assistance.
63. The first meeting of training centres for assistance and protection under Article X of the Convention, jointly organised by the Government of Switzerland and the Secretariat, took place from 9 to 11 July 2013 in the ABC Training Centre in Spiez, Switzerland. Eighteen participants representing training centres from across the globe attended the forum to discuss lessons learned and best practices for training related to assistance and protection. The meeting highlighted the benefits of enhanced interaction, coordination, and cooperation among the various training centres.
64. From 15 to 19 July, a basic course on assistance and protection against chemical weapons was held at the SWISSINT Training Centre of the Swiss Armed Forces in

the city of Stans-Oberdorf, Switzerland, as part of the long-term capacity-building project organised by the OPCW for States Parties in the French-speaking subregion of West Africa. This course was organised as a refresher course and is part of the offer made by Switzerland under Article X of the Convention to provide assistance and protection against chemical weapons. Fifteen participants from five countries attended this course.

65. On 19 and 20 August, a table-top exercise took place in Jakarta, Indonesia, with financial support from the European Union. Participants tested their skills and the functioning of organisational processes used, including operational and procedural matters, in a scenario involving a major chemical incident in the South East Asian Region. Thirty-eight participants from five countries attended the exercise. Australia and New Zealand provided facilitators for this activity.
66. From 26 to 30 August, the Brazilian National Authority and the Secretariat co-organised the third edition of the regional assistance-and-protection training course on chemical-emergency response (CAPEQ-3) for Portuguese-speaking countries. The course was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and was attended by 39 participants from seven States Parties.
67. From 2 to 6 September, the first training course for Russian-speaking first responders to incidents of chemical contamination was held in Belarus. The course was co organised by the Government of Belarus and the Secretariat and was attended by 19 experts from 13 countries.
68. An international training course on assistance and protection against chemical weapons was held at the Crisis Management Centre in Kuopio, Finland, from 9 to 13 September. Eighteen first responders from 16 States Parties attended this training course, which has been conducted on a yearly basis since 2003.
69. The second training course for instructors from African States Parties on assistance and protection, jointly organised and conducted by the Government of South Africa and the Secretariat, took place from 9 to 20 September in Tshwane, South Africa. The two-week training course was attended by 14 experts from 11 States Parties and provided participants with the capacity to train chemical emergency-response units in their respective countries.
70. Under the auspices of the OPCW Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa on the Chemical Weapons Convention, the second stage of the subregional capacity-building project for the Anglophone countries in West Africa was conducted in Kruševac, Serbia, from 16 to 20 September. The programme, supported by the Government of Norway, was attended by 12 experts from four countries.
71. From 23 to 27 September, the Government of Poland and the Secretariat co-organised the second international training course on sampling and analysis in a highly contaminated environment in Czestochowa, Poland. The training provided specialised skills to 18 experts involved in sampling and analysis of chemical warfare agents, from 15 States Parties.

72. The Secretariat sent an ACAT⁵ team to participate in the TRIPLEX exercise, organised by the International Humanitarian Partnership and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, in Denmark and Germany from 28 September to 4 October. TRIPLEX is a multi-organisational exercise aimed at enhancing relationships and interoperability with international organisations and agencies that have mandates relevant to assistance and protection against chemical weapons. The large-scale exercise designed to test cooperation, coordination, and interoperability in a complex disaster-management scenario was attended by a range of key stakeholders in international assistance operations.

International cooperation

73. On 27 September, the fourteenth edition of the Associate Programme was successfully completed. I wish to express my appreciation for the cooperation provided and efforts undertaken by all those Member States, institutions, and companies that have assisted us in organising this flagship programme. Thirty-two participants attended this year's programme, six of whom represented Member States participating for the first time. I would like to express my appreciation to all those Member States, companies, universities, and other partners, whose continued support is vital to the success of this important programme, including the University of Surrey in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Technical University of Delft in the Netherlands, the World Customs Organization, the European Chemical Industry Council, the European Association of Chemical Distributors, and the European Chemicals Agency.
74. Since its inception, the Associate Programme has trained in total 329 scientists and engineers from 108 Member States in areas related to state-of-the-art safety, production, and management practices in modern chemical industry. It has also imparted important knowledge on the provisions of the Convention and the work of the OPCW. Last year, the Secretariat initiated an active Alumni Association for the programme. I invite Member States to contribute to next year's edition of this programme.
75. Two courses on the enhancement of laboratory skills were held at the VERIFIN⁶ in September. The first course, held from 2 to 13 September, focused on the use of liquid chromatography–mass spectrometry to analyse chemicals related to the Convention. The second course, which took place from 9 to 20 September, was a new initiative related to laboratory quality management for laboratory managers. Each course hosted four participants from Botswana, Jamaica, Montenegro, and Tunisia; and Ecuador, Jordan, Kenya, and Uganda, respectively.
76. From 10 to 12 September in Doha, Qatar, the Government of Qatar and the Secretariat co-organised a seminar on chemical-safety-and-security management for Member States of the OPCW in the Asian region. This was the first event of this nature organised under the auspices of the Doha Regional Centre for CBRN Training, which was inaugurated during my visit on the occasion of last year's seminar in Qatar. A

⁵ ACAT = Assistance Coordination and Assessment Team

⁶ VERIFIN = Finnish Institute for Verification of the Chemical Weapons Convention

total of 45 participants, comprised of 25 international participants and 20 local participants, attended the seminar.

77. On 30 September and 1 October, a workshop on Article XI of the Convention was held in Budapest, Hungary, for States Parties in the Eastern European region. This event was co-organised by the Government of Hungary and the Secretariat as one of a series of regional workshops organised in accordance with the decision on Article XI taken by the Conference of the States Parties at its Sixteenth Session (C-16/DEC.10, dated 1 December 2011).
78. Under the Conference-Support Programme, a total of nine participants were sponsored to attend three conferences covering a broad range of relevant subjects, namely, the “IUPAC World Chemistry Congress 2013” in Turkey, the “Fundamentals of GC and Electron Ionization Mass Spectrometry” in Kenya, and the “Global Perspectives on the Structure and Dynamics of Liquids and Mixtures” in France. On the sidelines of the IUPAC congress, an OPCW booth was set up to provide information regarding the Convention and the activities of the OPCW.

Privileges and immunities

79. To date, the Council has approved 51 privileges-and-immunities agreements between the OPCW and States Parties. Of those, 50 have been signed and 30 have entered into force.
80. I would like to take this opportunity to encourage all States Parties that have already signed a bilateral agreement on privileges and immunities with the Organisation to complete the necessary domestic procedures in order to give effect to the terms of these agreements.
81. I also wish to recall the request of the Conference in its decision C-8/DEC.12, dated 23 October 2003, and invite all States Parties that have not yet negotiated their agreement with the OPCW on the matter of legal capacity, privileges, and immunities, to do so without delay.

Universality and external relations

82. During the intersessional period, the Secretariat has continued to maintain contacts with representatives of States not Party and has undertaken initiatives related to the objective of achieving universal adherence to the Convention.
83. In August of this year, the Director of External Relations called on the Ambassador of South Sudan at the Embassy of South Sudan in Brussels, Belgium, to discuss matters related to universal adherence to the Convention. In the following month, in September, the Director of External Relations called on the Ambassador of Angola at the Embassy of Angola here in The Hague. On 4 October, the Secretariat provided a briefing on the Chemical Weapons Convention and the work of the OPCW to a group of 15 mid-career diplomats from South Sudan.
84. During the reporting period, the Secretariat sponsored two participants of Myanmar to participate in the previously mentioned table-top exercise held in Jakarta, Indonesia, in August of this year. Two representatives of Angola were sponsored to participate

in the aforementioned basic course for personnel of National Authorities, organised by the OPCW in September in The Hague. In addition, the Secretariat has continued to invite representatives of States not Party to participate in various training and capacity-building activities by the OPCW, and to attend the Eighteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties.

85. On 25 September, as mentioned, the Secretariat organised its annual induction workshop for newly accredited diplomatic personnel. The event aims to provide an introductory overview on the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the work of the OPCW. The meeting was attended by 73 participants from 44 States Parties. Two representatives of South Sudan from the Embassy of South Sudan in Brussels, Belgium also participated in the workshop.
86. Prior to the induction workshop, on 12 and 13 September, the Secretariat conducted a tailor-made two-day induction programme for officials from Somalia, following the country's accession to the Convention earlier this year. The event provided an overview of the provisions of the Convention and of the rights and obligations of States Parties to the Convention, and introduced participants to the programmes and activities of the OPCW as well as to officials from the various parts of the Secretariat. The event was attended by three officials from Somalia.
87. On 6 September, the Secretariat organised a one-day programme on the Convention and the OPCW for the participants of this year's United Nations Disarmament Fellowship Programme. The participants also benefitted from field visits conducted in connection with the Summer Programme on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation of WMD in a Changing World by the T.M.C. Asser Institute, based in The Hague.
88. Since the last session of the Council, I have had the opportunity to visit a number of States Parties and to attend meetings and conferences relevant to the implementation of the Convention. Early in September, in connection with the visit of the Executive Council to China, I met with, inter alia, H.E. Mr Zhai Jun, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of China and delivered a speech at the Chinese Defence Institute. Later in September, I extended a visit to the Vatican and had an audience with His Holiness Pope Francis. I also met with H.E. Ms Marta Dassù, Under Secretary of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy. In connection with a visit to Finland in October, I met with H.E. Mr Erkki Tuomioja, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Finland, and H.E. Mr Jaakko Laajava, Under Secretary of State of Finland, and delivered a speech at VERIFIN.
89. During the reporting period, I received H.E. Mr Didier Burkhalter, Federal Councillor, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland and H.E. Mr Miroslav Lajčák, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Slovakia, at the OPCW Headquarters. I also met with the United Nations Secretary-General, H.E. Mr Ban Ki-Moon, in connection with his visit to the Peace Palace here in The Hague, in August. Also that month, in connection with a visit to the University of Surrey in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, I met with H.E. Mr Ahmet Davutoğlu, the Foreign Minister of Turkey.

Administrative and financial matters

90. Turning now to administrative and financial matters, I wish to report that, as at 1 October, 85.47% of annual contributions had been collected for 2013, as against 92.3% by the same date last year. I encourage those States Parties that have not yet fully paid their assessed contributions to please do so at the earliest and in full. States Parties in arrears are encouraged to consider entering into multi-year payment plans to settle their outstanding assessed contributions.
91. After successfully implementing the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) as its official accounting principles in 2011, the Secretariat has produced its second IPSAS-compliant Financial Statements, for the period ending 31 December 2012. The External Auditor of the OPCW has placed an unqualified audit opinion on the Financial Statements. He is scheduled to make a presentation to the Council at this session. I wish to express my appreciation to the External Auditor and his team for the support and advice they have provided to the OPCW.

Budgetary matters

92. As you are aware, the draft Programme and Budget for 2014, presented to delegations on 12 July 2013, has been discussed during the budget facilitations. On 6 September, the Secretariat proposed certain changes to the Draft Programme and Budget in order to accommodate views and suggestions made by States Parties during the facilitations and bilateral discussions. Among these changes, the Secretariat proposed the elimination of the Knowledge Management Centre Project Team as a subprogramme and instead the creation of a task force, without shifting staff resources to the Verification Division. Furthermore, EUR 280,000 currently included in the travel budget (non-staff) of the Office of Strategy and Policy will be dedicated to education and outreach activities, of which an amount of EUR 200,000 will be managed by the International Cooperation and Assistance Division and redirected to its budget.

Personnel matters

93. The Secretariat has recently adopted the United Nations International Civil Service Commission policy on danger pay. This has been driven by the new environment in which the Organisation and its staff members are required to operate. The policy provides for additional compensation of USD 1,600 per month to staff for periods of deployment in high-threat locations that are designated by the United Nations International Civil Service Commission as being eligible for danger pay. The Secretariat has also signed up to the United Nations-wide Malicious Acts Insurance Policy and purchased a high-security risk insurance policy for staff deployed in high-risk locations. These contracts provide cover for service-incurred risks that may result due to operations in conflict or post-conflict areas.
94. I thank you for your attention.