



OPCW

Executive Council

Seventy-Fifth Session
4 – 7 March 2014

EC-75/DG.10
4 March 2014
Original: ENGLISH

**OPENING STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL
TO THE SEVENTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

1. I welcome you all to the Seventy-Fifth Session of the Executive Council, the first in 2014.
2. 2013 saw momentous developments for chemical disarmament and the OPCW. These began with the Third Review Conference¹ in April successfully rendering an outcome document which provides us with guidance for our future priorities. Recognition of our success to date came in the form of the Nobel Peace Prize later in the year. The accession of Somalia and the Syrian Arab Republic saw our membership grow to 190 States Parties, while the mission to eliminate Syrian chemical weapons has presented unprecedented challenges. All of these developments have significantly raised the profile of our Organisation.
3. Since the Council last met in regular session last October, our mission in the Syrian Arab Republic has continued to remain a key focus of our activities. Important developments in this mission have been the subject of regular Council meetings and the monthly reports that I have provided to date—most recently, on 25 February. The Special Coordinator of the OPCW-UN Joint Mission, Ms Sigrid Kaag, will also brief the Council today.
4. As you are aware, on 23 February, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted a revised proposal for the movement of chemicals. The new proposal substantially reduces the time frame initially put forward by the Syrian Arab Republic, aiming now for the complete removal of all chemicals by 13 April, except for chemicals located at two presently inaccessible facilities, which would be removed by 27 April.
5. The Joint Mission is consulting with the Syrian authorities on the time frame and is seeking, on the basis of assessments by the Operational Planning Group, further ways to complete the removal earlier. Importantly, these assessments indicate that destruction could still be completed within close range of the mid-2014 deadline.

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



6. In another encouraging development, two more consignments of chemicals left the port of Latakia last week. Another movement—with 24 containers in four convoys transporting a large consignment of Priority 1 chemicals—is scheduled to arrive in Latakia this week. This will bring the total number of movements to six. As at today's date, 26% of all chemicals have been removed, and 93% of isopropanol has been destroyed in the Syrian Arab Republic. By this time next week, 35.17% of all chemicals will have been removed. This will comprise nearly 23% of all Priority 1 chemicals and 63% of Priority 2 chemicals.
7. Given delays since the lapse of the two target dates for removal, it will be important to maintain this newly created momentum. All materials and equipment required by the Syrian Arab Republic are now in place for the expeditious removal of chemicals—including armoured jackets for the protection of containers. For its part, the Syrian Government has reaffirmed its commitment to completing this mission in a timely manner.
8. With a view to concluding final arrangements for maritime transport and destruction elements of the mission, I hosted a coordination and planning meeting last week involving States Parties assisting this mission. The meeting was co-facilitated by the OPCW and the OPCW-UN Joint Mission. Discussions at the meeting provided a sound basis for moving forward. The summary report of the meeting is available on the external server.
9. We have more work ahead of us in reaching a decision on destruction of the 12 chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) that have been the subject of a number of rounds of discussions.
10. Arrangements for the disposal and treatment of certain chemicals in commercial facilities are well under way, with contracts having been recently awarded, as you are aware, to Ekokem of Finland and Veolia Environmental Services Technical Solutions of the United States of America. The Council also has before it two agreements that the Secretariat has concluded with States Parties hosting facilities that will treat and dispose of certain chemicals.
11. Following contributions from 19 States Parties, the destruction trust fund now stands at EUR 16 million. Thanks to pledges from the European Union, Japan, and other States Parties, we expect to receive additional contributions. This generous response to the appeal launched on 19 November 2013 lays testimony to the spirit of cooperation that has imbued this international endeavour.
12. I welcome the significant milestone that Libya reached in its destruction programme earlier this year. As at 26 January, all Category 1 munitions in Libya had been successfully destroyed. During my trip to Libya on 4 February, I visited the chemical weapons destruction facility at Ruwagha with German and United States officials, whose governments, alongside that of Canada, provided strong support and generous assistance.

13. The Secretariat remains seized of the importance of ensuring substantive action following up the Third Review Conference, in concert with States Parties and other stakeholders. To this end, the Secretariat has updated the Matrix of Actionable Items (EC-75/S/7, dated 18 February 2014), also taking into account official documents and non-papers issued since the Conference. I present the matrix to States Parties as a guide for advancing the recommendations of the Third Review Conference. The matrix will also be used by the Technical Secretariat as a basis for planning future programmes of activities. This issue, as agreed, will remain on the agenda of the Council.
14. I welcome the decision taken by States Parties at informal consultations last week to receive briefings in the Council on issues related to Articles VII, X, and XI. The Secretariat will make a presentation on Article XI at this Council session and will do the same for Articles VII and X at the July session. I hope delegations will use this opportunity to provide feedback to the Secretariat on the effectiveness of its activities and put forward concrete suggestions to improve our future programmes.
15. As part of the Secretariat's ongoing efforts to promote education and outreach, I will attend a regional meeting on responsible use of chemistry, to be held in Buenos Aires in early April. As you are aware, this meeting, organised at the initiative of the Argentine National Authority, will provide a valuable opportunity to showcase tools we have been developing with various stakeholders for raising practical awareness of the Convention and its obligations. This meeting will encourage exchanges on best practices, and I am confident that it will stimulate similar initiatives in other regional settings.
16. Efforts to embed results-based management (RBM) continue in the OPCW. The Secretariat has conducted a "scan" of the Organisation's RBM capability with the assistance of an external consultant, and is moving to improve and broaden implementation of RBM principles throughout the Technical Secretariat.
17. As recommended by States Parties at the Third Review Conference, preparatory work relating to the knowledge management initiative is being undertaken in 2014 within the existing resources. Identification and analysis of knowledge and expertise relating to the implementation of the Convention within the Secretariat have commenced within these parameters.
18. The accession of Somalia and the Syrian Arab Republic to the Convention last year has spurred us to intensify our efforts on achieving universality. As part of this, I intend to write again to States not Party to urge their accession without delay or preconditions, taking account of the high level of international focus on chemical disarmament. I encourage States Parties in a position to do so to use their bilateral and regional contacts to this end.
19. In light of recently heightened concern over the plight of chemical warfare victims, I intend to make a modest one-off contribution from the Nobel Peace Prize money to the International Support Network for Victims of Chemical Weapons.

20. Delegates will be aware that the OPCW will be within the security zone for hosting of the Nuclear Security Summit later this month. Part of our premises will be used to support the international media centre for that event. The OPCW will nonetheless remain operational during the Summit. An alternative conference facility in the Peace Palace has been arranged, should the need arise for a Council meeting.
21. 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 read only the highlights; my detailed statement will be made available to the Council as an official document of this session.

Chemical demilitarisation and verification

22. The destruction of chemical weapons has continued during the intersessional period at six chemical weapons destruction facilities (CWDFs) in the Russian Federation and Libya, and limited activity has taken place at one facility in the United States of America. As at 31 January 2014, the overall amount of chemical weapons verified as destroyed amounted to 58,538 MTs, or nearly 82% of the declared chemical weapons.
23. The Russian Federation has made significant progress in the destruction of chemical weapons during the intersessional period.
24. The Maradykovsky facility continued the destruction of 250-kg aerial bombs filled with viscous soman until September 2013. Following the final engineering review of the new process building in September, the facility commenced the destruction of the aerial bomb blocks in November. The facility entered a period of inactivity for maintenance purposes in December and resumed the destruction of 250-kg aerial bombs and aerial bomb blocks in January 2014.
25. The facility at Pochep completed the destruction of Vx-filled modules in December 2013. Following a maintenance period, during which destruction activity was suspended, the destruction of 500-kg spray tanks filled with viscous soman resumed at the end of January 2014.
26. In September 2013, the Shchuchye facility completed the destruction of two types of 152-mm projectiles and one type of 122-mm projectile. All projectiles were filled with soman. In addition, the facility completed the destruction of soman-filled 122-mm projectiles in December 2013. Following a maintenance period, during which destruction activity was suspended, the facility resumed operations regarding the destruction of Vx-filled 122-mm warheads in March 2014.
27. The facility at Leonidovka has continued the destruction of soman-filled aerial bomb blocks. Following a maintenance period, the facility resumed destruction activities in January 2014.
28. Following the final engineering review of the newly built facility at Kizner, the operations started with the destruction of sarin-filled 122-mm warheads in

December 2013. Following a maintenance period, the facility plans to resume destruction operations in early April 2014.

29. As at 31 January 2014, the Russian Federation had destroyed 31,002 MTs, or nearly 78%, of its total declared amount of Category 1 chemical weapons.
30. In November 2013, the United States of America destroyed 0.0205 MTs of unknown recovered agent at Pine Bluff Arsenal, Arkansas. The United States of America has informed the Secretariat that it has completed the construction work for the major buildings at the Pueblo destruction plant, and that systemisation for this facility has reached 44%. Similarly, it has completed 77% of the construction work for the Blue Grass destruction plant and has also reached 14% systemisation at this facility.
31. As at 31 January 2014, the Secretariat had verified the destruction by the United States of America of 24,923 MTs, or nearly 90% of its total declared amount of Category 1 chemical weapons.
32. In November 2013, the Technical Secretariat conducted a final engineering review at the Ruwagha Static Detonation Chamber (RSDC), which had been manufactured and shipped in October 2013 and subsequently installed for the destruction of projectiles, aerial bombs, and bomb cartridges. Libya started the destruction of the sulfur mustard-filled 130-mm projectiles in November 2013 and completed their destruction in January 2014. Furthermore, also in January, Libya destroyed all sulfur mustard-filled 250-kg aerial bombs, and bomb cartridges. Libya is currently destroying the polymerised sulfur mustard heel remaining in the transportation tanks after their bulk sulfur mustard removal and destruction in April and May 2013.
33. As at 31 January 2014, Libya had destroyed 23.9 MTs, or 90.7% of its declared amount of Category 1 chemical weapons.
34. Iraq has continued to develop its plan for the destruction of the contents of Al-Muthana storage bunkers. Iraq prepared a draft of the detailed facility information for the Al-Muthana Destruction Project and submitted it to the Secretariat in November 2013.
35. In the intersessional period, the Secretariat has conducted three missions at converted CWPFs in the Russian Federation. In December 2013, the Secretariat also issued the certificate of completion of the conversion of one former CWPF (Al-Rashad Site) in Iraq.
36. During the intersessional period, two inspections of chemical weapons storage facilities (CWSFs) were conducted—one in Libya and one in the Russian Federation.
37. Also during the intersessional period, four old chemical weapon (OCW) inspections were conducted in Canada, France, Italy, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
38. One inspection was conducted at the abandoned chemical weapons (ACW) excavation and recovery site located at Tianjin in China.

39. China and Japan continue to work together in preparing for the commencement of destruction activities in Wuhan, which are expected to start in 2014, as well as further destruction at the Mobile Destruction Facility located in Shijiazhuang. As regards the destruction operations at Haerbaling, the manufacture of the destruction units has been completed and these components have been shipped to China. The facilities for the destruction units are under construction and are expected to be completed this year.

Declarations

40. Since the last session of the Council, bilateral meetings with 10 States Parties have been held regarding Article III declarations. One technical-assistance visit has been conducted in a State Party in order to provide assistance to prepare and submit an initial declaration.

Timeliness of submissions of annual declarations

41. In 2013 the Secretariat received four initial declarations regarding Articles III and VI from Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau, the Syrian Arab Republic, and Tuvalu. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines submitted an initial declaration regarding Article III. These submissions are the result of assistance efforts by the Secretariat with a focus on long-outstanding initial declarations. As at 11 February 2014, 185 States Parties had submitted their initial declarations—183 States Parties fully and two States Parties partially. Those two States Parties submitted their initial declaration under Article VI but not yet under Article III. Five States Parties have yet to submit their initial declarations both under Article III and under Article VI of the Convention. The Secretariat will continue to work with those seven States Parties towards the submission of their outstanding initial declarations.
42. As regards annual declarations, the Council has received a status report on the timely submission of declarations under Article VI for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2013 for consideration at this session (EC-75/DG.1, dated 15 January 2014). The timeliness of submissions of annual declarations on past activities (ADPA) has improved gradually.
43. As at 31 December 2013, 67%² of the States Parties with declarable facilities and/or declarable activities had submitted their ADPA 2012 on time, compared to 62% for ADPA 2011. The number of States Parties that submitted their ADPA more than 30 days late was reduced from 20 for ADPA 2011 to 13 for ADPA 2012.

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As at 31 December 2013, of 83 States Parties with declarable facilities and/or activities, 56 States Parties (67%) submitted their ADPA for 2012 on time; of 88 States Parties with declarable facilities and/or activities, 55 States Parties (62%) submitted their ADPA for 2011 on time.

44. In the case of annual declarations of anticipated activities (ADAA), 80% of States Parties with declarable facilities and activities submitted at least part of their ADAA on time for 2014. This figure stood at 86% of States Parties as regards ADAA 2013³.
45. I encourage States Parties to submit their annual declarations for anticipated and past activities before the deadlines set by the Convention. The deadline for submission of the next ADPA is 31 March 2014.

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

46. Nine States Parties have responded to the third survey on the status of implementation of the decision establishing guidelines on low-concentration limits for declarations of Schedule 2A and 2A* chemicals (S/1125/2013, dated 17 September 2013) during the intersessional period. Five of these States Parties informed the Secretariat that they had implemented the decision.
47. Based on the results of three surveys undertaken in 2011, 2012, and 2013, and previous submissions under paragraph 5 of Article VII, 31 States Parties have indicated that they have implemented the decision. Seventeen States Parties have informed the Secretariat that implementation of the decision is in process or that the decision has not yet been implemented. Details on this matter will be provided in the Verification Implementation Report (VIR) for 2013, which is scheduled to be issued in May this year.

Declarations Handbook, version 2013

48. The Secretariat announced to States Parties the release of the 2013 version of the Declarations Handbook in November last year. The Declarations Handbook was revised, taking into account the views and comments of States Parties and incorporating new decisions and reports agreed by the OPCW policy-making organs since the previous version of 2008. This publication provides a more detailed explanation of each declaration form, examples of common problems identified in Article VI declarations, and recommendations on how to avoid these problems. In addition, in line with a proposal by States Parties, the Secretariat incorporated in this version new guidance on resolving transfer discrepancies, with a suggested approach to their resolution.

Electronic declarations

49. The Secretariat continues its work on the Secure Information Exchange (SIX) project, which aims at enhancing the efficiency of information exchange between the Secretariat and States Parties, as well as at improving the timeliness of declarations. Following completion of the pilot phase, in close collaboration with several States Parties from different regions, the system was demonstrated to States Parties during the Fifteenth Annual Meeting of the National Authorities held from 27 to 30 November 2013, as well

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As at 31 December 2013, of 46 States Parties with declarable facilities and activities, 37 States Parties (80%) submitted at least part of their ADAA for 2014 on time; of 44 States Parties with declarable facilities and activities, 38 States Parties (86%) submitted at least part of their ADAA for 2013 on time.

as in the margins of the Eighteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties. The Secretariat has undertaken an overall security assessment of the system. Updates on the progress of the project were shared with States Parties at meetings of the Industry Cluster on 19 February, and further information will be made available on the OPCW extranet site. States Parties are encouraged to review the information and to submit any additional questions regarding the project to the Secretariat.

50. In January 2014, the new version of the electronic declarations tool for National Authorities, EDNA, version 3.0, was made available to States Parties. The new version includes a dedicated module for the declaration of Schedule 1 facilities and activities. States Parties, in particular those with declarable Schedule 1 activities, are encouraged to consider using this new version in their preparation of electronic declarations. Meetings and training sessions, including the fourth user-group forum for EDNA, were organised during the Fifteenth Annual Meeting of the National Authorities, as well as in the margins of the Eighteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties. The Secretariat will continue to enhance the EDNA software and the Verification Information System (VIS) in 2014. A status report on the VIS has been made available for your consideration (EC-75/S/4, dated 15 January 2014).

Article VI inspections

51. In 2013, 229 inspections were completed. Of these, 11 were conducted at Schedule 1, 42 at Schedule 2, 29 at Schedule 3 facilities and 147 at other chemical production facilities (OCPFs). In accordance with the Programme and Budget for 2014 (C-18/DEC.6, dated 4 December 2013), 241 Article VI inspections are planned for this year. Of these, 11 are planned to be conducted at Schedule 1, 42 at Schedule 2, and 19 at Schedule 3 facilities. We have established the rate of re-inspection for Schedule 3 inspections for 2014 at 47%. This conforms to the policy guidelines for determining the number of Article VI inspections (EC-66/DEC.10, dated 7 October 2011), which stipulate, inter alia, that facilities which have not yet received inspections should be given priority. The number of re-inspections will remain stable at nine. In order to be consistent with the budgeted total of 19 Schedule 3 inspections in 2014, the number of initial inspections will be reduced to 10. The rate of re-inspection for OCPF inspections will increase slightly, from 15% in 2013 to 20% in 2014. This represents a balance between the objectives of achieving a broad geographic dispersion of inspections and respecting the policy guideline on the maximum length of time between inspections in any one State Party.
52. The Secretariat has reported on the performance of the revised site-selection methodology for the selection of OCPF inspections conducted in 2013 (S/1157/2014, dated 10 February 2014). Using the revised methodology (S/962/2011, dated 8 September 2011) the Secretariat selected 147 OCPF plant sites for inspection in 2013. The revised methodology allowed the Secretariat to maintain a balanced geographical distribution while targeting the OCPFs according to their level of relevance. The coverage across States Parties improved further, with OCPF inspections taking place in 43 of the 80 States Parties that declared inspectable activity. States Parties declaring a higher number of OCPF plant sites can expect more inspections than those that declare

fewer. The methodology continues to result in fewer selections of OCPFs with low A15 values and a higher proportion of plant sites with high A15 values.

OPCW Laboratory

53. Samples for the fourth biomedical sample analysis exercise were dispatched to 21 laboratories on 24 February. This exercise is focused on the determination of long-lasting biomarkers of nerve agents in blood plasma. The ability of our partner laboratories to analyse these biomarkers is an important capability in the context of investigations of alleged use of chemical agents.

Inspectorate training

54. In response to obligations relating to the operations in the Syrian Arab Republic, the Inspectorate training programme has been expanded. This included a regular toxic chemicals training (TCT) course, as well as the provision of special safety training (SSAFE). This course is provided to all staff deployed to the Syrian Arab Republic.
55. The aforementioned training courses were convened in Germany as well as the United States of America. In addition, a special training course was provided by the United States of America to a group of eight inspectors that will be deployed to verify the destruction of certain chemicals on board the United States vessel MV Cape Ray.

Science and technology

56. The Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) will hold its Twenty-First Session from 23 to 27 June. Prior to that, the Temporary Working Group (TWG) on Verification will hold its third meeting in April. The TWG on Education and Outreach will continue its work throughout the year.
57. The TWG on the Convergence of Chemistry and Biology concluded its work in November of last year. The Group is producing a substantive final report on its deliberations.
58. With reference to last year's SAB session, I have received technical advice from the SAB on assistance and protection, which will be issued in the form of a SAB working paper. I also expect to receive advice on riot control agents from the SAB soon.
59. This year, the Secretariat intends to engage delegations on science and technology through a series of workshops aimed at highlighting how science advice and innovation can further strengthen the implementation of the Convention. Follow-up to the SAB's recommendations to the Third Review Conference (RC-3/DG.1, dated 29 October 2012 and RC-3/DG.2, dated 31 January 2013) will form part of these workshops.
60. On 1 January, five new members of the SAB began their first terms of office: Dr Veronica Borrett of Australia, Dr Syed Raza of India, Mr Valentin Rubaylo of the Russian Federation, Dr Koji Takeuchi of Japan, and Mr Cheng Tang of China.

61. I would like to thank the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for its most recent contribution to the SAB trust fund. Such contributions are much appreciated and allow the SAB to continue providing valuable advice to me and to States Parties on relevant scientific and technological developments. I hope that States Parties will once again respond favourably to the request for voluntary contributions to the SAB trust fund that was issued last July (S/1119/2013, dated 24 July 2013).

Education and outreach

62. From 7 to 9 April the Secretariat, in cooperation with the Government of Argentina, will hold a regional meeting on education in the responsible application of knowledge of dual-use chemicals. The meeting is intended to promote national initiatives on education and outreach within the GRULAC⁴ region, to foster the involvement of those from the education sector in the promotion of responsible chemistry, to demonstrate the approaches, tools, and materials that are available, and to stimulate similar discussions within other regional groups of the OPCW. The workshop will provide an opportunity for participating States Parties to share information on their own national initiatives, to exchange experiences and lessons learned, and to confer with the Secretariat on issues relating to the implementation of the recommendations made by the Third Review Conference.
63. This meeting will also be an opportunity to disseminate some of the educational tools and materials developed under the auspices of the TWG on Education and Outreach. For example, the Secretariat has produced a short film entitled “Fires: A Teacher’s Mission” which introduces viewers to ethical issues raised by chemical weapons. With financial support from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the film has been subtitled in all official OPCW languages. It can be seen at www.thefiresproject.com and an accompanying lesson plan will soon be published. In addition, with support from the European Union, the Secretariat has collaborated with the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC) to update an interactive web-based educational module on the multiple uses of chemicals. The updated website can be found at <http://multiple.kcvs.ca>.
64. The Secretariat is collaborating with the nearby science centre, Museon, to develop a temporary exhibition on the OPCW. The exhibition will start before the opening of the Nuclear Security Summit, and will run until November 2014.

Counterterrorism

65. The Council has before it a Note on the OPCW’s contribution to global counterterrorism efforts for its consideration (EC-75/DG.3, dated 12 February 2014). It addresses the activities carried out by the Technical Secretariat in this area during the past year, including cooperation with the United Nations and other international organisations, as well as the deliberations of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on Terrorism, for

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GRULAC = Group of Latin American and Caribbean States

example, in the fields of assistance and protection and chemical safety and security. At its most recent meeting, held yesterday, the OEWG covered aspects relating to the cooperation with the United Nations in the fight against terrorism. H.E. Mr Oh Joon, Chairperson of the United Nations Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), and Mr Terence Taylor, Coordinator of the Group of Experts supporting the Committee, addressed the working group on the Committee's mandate and activities, as well as on the status of implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

66. As I had mentioned in my statement to the Conference of the States Parties in December, the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) has approved a project proposal developed by the Technical Secretariat that aims to ensure effective interagency interoperability and effective communication in the event of chemical and/or biological attacks. The CTITF is now seeking funding for the project; implementation is expected to begin this year.

International cooperation and assistance

67. The Secretariat has continued to provide support to States Parties under Articles VII, X, and XI. Since the last session of the Council, the Secretariat has continued to organise activities to support States Parties' implementation of their obligations in the field of assistance and protection. The Secretariat has also continued to provide training and capacity-building initiatives to States Parties as regards the implementation of Article VII and implementation support, and has continued to promote activities related to implementation of Article XI.
68. Highlights of these activities included the first-ever workshop on a "Schedule 1 Users Forum" for States Parties that have declared Schedule 1 facilities; the ongoing preparations for the fifteenth edition of the Associate Programme, to take place this year; the support provided to research projects under the Programme for Support of Research Projects; a subregional training course for customs authorities in Asia related to the fulfilment of Article VI-related obligations; the Annual Meeting of National Authorities, which was successfully convened at OPCW Headquarters at the end of last year, as well as a basic course for personnel of National Authorities conducted earlier this year in The Hague; and the Sixth Internship Programme for Legal Drafters and National Authorities' Representatives, held at the OPCW last month.
69. I would like to express my appreciation for the generous voluntary financial and in-kind contributions provided by States Parties, as well as the European Union, in support of the activities conducted in the field of international cooperation and assistance.
70. From 13 to 16 January 2014, the first workshop on Schedule 1 facilities entitled "Schedule 1 Users Forum" was conducted in Madrid. The workshop was hosted by the Government of Spain in cooperation with the Technical Secretariat. The event was attended by 38 participants from the 17 OPCW Member States that have declared Schedule 1 facilities. The workshop provided a forum to share experiences regarding all

matters relating to Schedule 1 facilities, including declarations, verification, and international cooperation among facilities and laboratories.

71. Preparations are currently under way to organise the fifteenth edition of the Associate Programme, from 31 July to 3 October this year. I wish to take this opportunity to invite those States Parties with a modern chemical industry to provide their support to the forthcoming edition of the programme by offering industry attachments for the participants. From 14 to 22 December 2013, the Secretariat organised the first virtual meeting of the Alumni Association of the Associate Programme on the theme “The OPCW Associate Programme: lessons learned and way forward”. Forty alumni participated in the meeting and produced recommendations for the future implementation of the programme, which were shared during the informal consultations on Article XI.
72. As part of the continuous analysis and review of its international cooperation and assistance programmes, the Secretariat concluded that any further expansion of the Associate Programme to accommodate a maximum of 40 participants will require structural changes. Given the challenges in identifying suitable industries for internships for such a large group, the Secretariat is considering the replacement of the internship element of three weeks with a two-week module on chemical safety-and-security issues. This would incorporate group visits to industries located in Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands.
73. The Secretariat has engaged with the Association of the Dutch Chemical Industry (VNCI) to identify suitable industry facilities to this end. The Secretariat has also engaged with the Dutch chemical training institute, VAPRO, as regards the development of an academic and practical curriculum. We are hopeful that this new approach will be successful and that it will be supported by States Parties. The Secretariat will update States Parties on future developments in this regard.
74. Under the Programme for Support of Research Projects, four projects were completed during the intersessional period. Six new projects from Argentina, Malaysia, Nigeria, the Russian Federation, and Uruguay have received support from the Technical Secretariat.
75. In the framework of the Internship Programme, the OPCW continues its cooperation with VERIFIN⁵ (Finland), Spiez laboratory (Switzerland), and several other institutions hosting and providing on-the-job training to scientists from Member States with economies that are developing or in transition. Three internships were completed during the intersessional period and two other internships are ongoing at VERIFIN.
76. On 2 and 3 February 2014, a subregional training course for customs authorities in Gulf Cooperation Council countries was held in Doha, Qatar. This event was followed by a training course for representatives of National Authorities of States Parties in Asia involved in fulfilling Article VI declaration requirements. The two courses were organised back to back.

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

77. The Secretariat has continued to organise basic courses for personnel of National Authorities involved in the implementation of the Convention. These courses provide an overview of the Chemical Weapons Convention, as well as of matters relating to its implementation. From 24 to 28 February, the Secretariat organised a basic course at OPCW Headquarters; the course offered simultaneous French interpretation to participants.
78. The Secretariat also continued to provide support to States Parties that are yet to start drafting national implementing legislation. The Sixth Internship Programme for Legal Drafters and National Authorities' Representatives was held at OPCW Headquarters from 24 to 28 February 2014.
79. In the context of the National Authority Mentorship Programme, three officials of the National Authority of Sudan extended a visit to Malaysia from 16 to 20 December 2013.
80. The Annual Meeting of National Authorities was held at OPCW Headquarters from 27 to 30 November 2013. A total of 210 representatives from 131 States Parties took part in the meeting, which featured briefings, updates, and group discussions on matters relating to the national implementation of the Convention.

Privileges-and-immunities agreements

81. Two bilateral agreements on privileges and immunities have entered into force since the last session of the Council, namely with Bulgaria and South Africa. The number of privileges-and-immunities agreements currently in force now stands at 32.

Universality and external relations

82. The Secretariat has continued to actively engage with representatives of States not Party to promote universal adherence to the Convention. The Secretariat has extended invitations to representatives of Angola, Myanmar, and South Sudan to attend OPCW-related activities. Myanmar has nominated one representative to participate in the twelfth regional meeting of National Authorities of States Parties in Asia, jointly organised by Iraq and the OPCW Technical Secretariat, which will take place in Erbil, Iraq, during the first half of this year. Nominations are awaited from Angola and South Sudan for participants to attend a seminar on the Chemical Weapons Convention and chemical safety and security management, to be held in Durban, South Africa, from 18 to 20 March.
83. With a view to continuing outreach and assistance initiatives to States not Party, the Secretariat participated in the Myanmar-US-UK Dialogue on Non-proliferation, held in Yangon, Myanmar, on 7 and 8 February 2014. The Secretariat also proposed a number of activities relating to technical support, capacity building, and training for the consideration of the Government of Myanmar.
84. I have hosted a number of high-level visitors at OPCW Headquarters in recent weeks, notably by the President of France, H.E. Mr François Hollande; the Deputy Prime

Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Ireland, H.E. Mr Eamon Gilmore; the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Benin, H.E. Mr Nassirou Bako-Arifari; and the Chief of the Armed Forces of Switzerland, Commandant de Corps André Blattmann.

85. In January, I visited Italy, where I met with the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy, H.E. Ms Emma Bonino, and briefed Italian parliamentarians on the mission in the Syrian Arab Republic. I was also honoured with the award of the Medaglia d'Onore and the Sigillum Magnum from the University of Bologna. In February, I visited a CWDF site in Libya and met with the Libyan Foreign Minister, H.E. Mr Mohamed Abdulaziz.
86. The Deputy Director-General attended the inauguration of a newly-built CWDF at Kizner, the Russian Federation, in December. The Deputy Director-General also delivered a lecture at Schiller International University in Germany in February.

Administrative and financial matters

87. As at 31 December 2013, 95.6% of annual contributions had been collected for 2013, as against 95.5% by the same date last year. The collection rate for the 2014 assessed annual contributions stood at 27.2% as at 31 January 2014, compared to 16.9% on the same date last year. I encourage those States Parties that have not paid their assessed contributions for this year as well as previous years, to do so at the earliest opportunity.
88. Preparation of the Draft Programme and Budget for 2015 has commenced with an initial assessment by each Division of its programmatic priorities for next year. I plan to present the draft for review by the States Parties in July, immediately prior to the Seventy-Sixth Session of the Council. The Budget will also focus on the allocation of resources in accordance with the principles of RBM and ensure that programme priorities for 2015 are consistent with the priorities outlined in the Medium-Term Plan.
89. This concludes my report. I thank you for your attention.

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