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OPENING STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AT ITS EIGHTY-SECOND SESSION

Madam Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

1. I welcome delegations to the Eighty-Second Session of the Executive Council.
2. It gives me great pleasure to welcome the new Chairperson of the Council, Ambassador Odette Melono of Cameroon who, I am confident, will lead the work of the Council in a successful and able manner. The Secretariat and I will extend every support during her tenure.
3. I will start with developments relating to the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme.
4. Further to efforts to complete the destruction of remaining chemical weapons production facilities, the security situation in the Syrian Arab Republic continues to preclude access to one aircraft hangar, as well as the other two sites. The remote monitoring system installed at four destroyed underground structures is functional, and the Secretariat has finalised the contract for undertaking maintenance and repair of the system.
5. At its last session, the Council requested that I meet with officials of the Syrian Arab Republic and report to the Council on the outcome of these discussions on outstanding issues related to Syria's initial declaration (EC-81/DEC.4, dated 23 March 2016). My report, based on this engagement, has been circulated (EC-82/HP/DG.2*, dated 30 June 2016). As noted by the Executive Council in its decision adopted at its March session (EC-81/DEC.4, dated 23 March 2106), I intend to attach my report to the Director-General's monthly report that I regularly send to the United Nations Secretary-General.
6. I shall address the outcomes of my engagement with the Syrian Arab Republic under the relevant agenda item of this session of the Council. An unclassified version of the conclusions of my report has been made available (EC-82/DG.18, dated 6 July 2016), as has a separate report by the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) (EC-82/HP/DG.3, dated 4 July 2016). The Head of the DAT provided an informal briefing to States Parties on Thursday last week.



7. The Trust Fund for Syria Missions, established last November, has continued to provide vital financial support for ongoing activities related to the Syrian Arab Republic. As at 30 June, the balance stood at EUR 6.3 million, thanks to generous contributions by the European Union and a number of States Parties.
8. The Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) continues its work in accordance with relevant Executive Council decisions. While it has not undertaken any deployments or reports since the last session of the Council, the FFM has continued to collect and analyse open-source information and information provided by States Parties and other sources. The Secretariat will make a presentation on the work of the FFM under the relevant agenda item.
9. The OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), established pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolution 2235 (2015), continues to work as an independent body. The JIM issued its most recent report to the United Nations Security Council on 16 June, which was also made available to States Parties for their information. The Technical Secretariat continues to be responsive to requests from the JIM by providing technical and logistical support.
10. As I reported in March, the Government of Iraq shared with the Secretariat information regarding alleged chemical weapons attacks at three locations in Iraq. A technical-assistance visit (TAV) team has been deployed to Iraq on two occasions since that time to assist Iraqi authorities with their investigations. The TAV team met with relevant authorities, collected samples, and conducted interviews with victims and medical doctors.
11. Progress on the destruction of remaining chemical weapons continues, and as at 30 June had reached 92.5% of declared Category 1 chemical weapons. An Executive Council delegation visited the Kizner chemical weapons destruction facility in the Russian Federation in April. Kizner is the last chemical weapons destruction facility in operation in the Russian Federation, and is expected to complete the destruction by December 2020.
12. Construction and systemisation of two destruction facilities in the United States of America—at Blue Grass and Pueblo—are under way. Despite a delay in the scheduled commencement date for operations at Pueblo, the United States has provided assurances that this will not affect the planned completion date for destruction operations of 2023.
13. As delegates are aware, the Secretariat has verified the complete destruction by Libya of all declared Category 1 and 3 chemical weapons, as well as 689.066 MTs of remaining Category 2 stocks. On 24 May, the Libyan National Authority informed the Secretariat that the decanting of the remaining Category 2 stocks into new tanks, purchased with the assistance of the Government of Canada, had been completed. The Libyan authorities have also requested assistance in fitting these containers with global positioning tracking devices to facilitate verification activities.
14. In response to Libya's security and technology-related concerns over completing the destruction of these stocks, the Secretariat continues to work with relevant States Parties to identify and evaluate technical, operational, security, financial, and legal

options in accordance with the Council's decision EC-M-51/DEC.1 (dated 24 February 2016).

15. Iraq has approached the Secretariat with a request for training assistance in preparation for the destruction of remnants of chemical weapons stored at Al-Muthanna. In response, the Secretariat has undertaken to procure training for destruction operators in medical response, sampling, and handling of contaminated chemical weapons, based on a financial contribution provided by Canada in May.
16. Activities related to the excavation, recovery, and destruction of chemical weapons abandoned by Japan on the territory of China continue. Over the intersessional period, the Secretariat conducted one destruction inspection at Haerbaling and two storage inspections at Nianzishan and Yichun. The Secretariat continues to work closely with Chinese and Japanese authorities on the excavation, recovery, and destruction of abandoned chemical weapons in China, including holding a tripartite meeting in Tokyo on 29 and 30 June.
17. As part of its ongoing efforts to counter the threat of chemical terrorism, the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on Terrorism met yesterday under the chairmanship of H.E. Mr Tony Aidoo, Permanent Representative of Ghana. The meeting usefully focused on how the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention interact with existing international legal instruments against terrorism. Ambassador Aidoo will make an oral presentation under the relevant agenda item of this session of the Council. I also draw delegates' attention to the report of the Chairperson of the Sub-Working Group on Non-State Actors, H.E. María Teresa Infante, Permanent Representative of Chile (EC-82/WP.1, dated 7 July 2016). The sub-working group has hosted several substantive exchanges, and I encourage all States Parties to participate actively in this important forum. In particular, I welcome States Parties' comments on new initiatives proposed in the recently circulated paper on the OPCW's role in supporting global chemical security (S/1395/2016, dated 13 June 2016).
18. Since the last session of the Council, the Secretariat has had further contact with South Sudanese officials on that country's intention to join the Chemical Weapons Convention. In particular, they have sought the Secretariat's views on the option of succession to the Convention, based on advice they received from the Treaty Section of the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs. The Secretariat is following this matter up.
19. Our network of designated laboratories for the off-site analysis of environmental samples currently has 19 laboratories from 15 States Parties. At present, we have formal agreements with only 11 of these laboratories, and I encourage those States Parties that host designated laboratories to assist their laboratories in arranging agreements with the Secretariat. This will allow them to respond positively to our requests for sample analyses.
20. The first biomedical proficiency test is now complete. Twenty-six laboratories from 22 Member States participated in this test. Seventeen laboratories from 14 Member States have received an "A" grade, and will be designated for the off-site analysis of biomedical samples.

21. The Secure Information Exchange (SIX) system is now being used by 36 States Parties to communicate with the Secretariat. For the annual declarations on past activities (ADPA) 2015 round, 31 out of 32 declarations received via SIX were submitted on time.
22. A number of States Parties have expressed an interest in moving to paperless communication with the Secretariat for confidential information, where possible. The Secretariat is working on increasing the coverage of the SIX system and assisting States Parties with their requests to adopt the system.
23. In the first six months of 2016, 113 Article VI inspections have been carried out. This includes three inspections at Schedule 1 facilities, 20 at Schedule 2 plant sites, six at Schedule 3 plant sites, and 84 at other chemical production facilities, or OCPFs. This represents 47% of the 241 inspections provided for in the Programme and Budget for 2016.
24. A number of measures, including carrying out sequential inspections and optimising the number of inspectors used in different types of missions, have allowed the Secretariat to carry out Article VI inspections more efficiently.
25. In 2016, the use of sampling and analysis (S&A) during Article VI inspections has continued routinely at Schedule 2 inspections and on a trial basis in OCPF inspections.
26. The Council Secretary of the International Council of Chemical Associations (ICCA) chaired the first meeting of the OPCW-ICCA Joint Steering Committee on 13 April, in which cooperation activities were discussed and prioritised with representatives of the Secretariat. The Committee acknowledged the added value of cross-participation in events organised by the OPCW and the ICCA.
27. Over the intersessional period, the Secretariat has delivered 35 courses, seminars, and workshops, and supported eight capacity-building programmes, organised by partner institutions for a total of 835 participants on the implementation of Articles VII, X, and XI. Throughout October this year, we are planning to deliver 24 events and activities in the field of international cooperation and assistance and in support of States Parties' efforts to improve and expand their implementation of the Convention.
28. The Secretariat continues to explore new ways of evaluating the effectiveness of these activities, in close cooperation with States Parties. The Secretariat will make presentations under the relevant agenda items in the course of this session of the Council.
29. Further afield, the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) met for its Twenty-Third Session from 18 to 22 April. Its report (SAB-23/1, dated 22 April 2016) has been circulated to States Parties, along with my response and additional views on the impact of science and technology in the context of the Chemical Weapons Convention (EC-82/DG.13, dated 7 June 2016).
30. I encourage you to attend the regular "Science for Diplomats" briefing tomorrow, which will be held at 13:30 in the Ooms Room. This briefing will review advice on scheduled chemicals (SAB-23/WP.1, dated 28 April 2016).

31. The Advisory Board on Education and Outreach (ABEO) held its first session at the end of April at OPCW Headquarters, and a report on the outcomes of this session has been circulated (ABEO-1/1, dated 29 April 2016). The Board agreed to contribute to a number of projects under way at the Secretariat, including the OPCW's twentieth anniversary, website redevelopment, and youth outreach, in addition to providing advice on enhancing education and outreach strategies. ABEO members have also actively contributed to recent regional meetings on education and outreach, in which they have been able to share knowledge and best practices. The ABEO's next session will take place in October, ahead of the next regular session of the Council. The ABEO Chairperson, Dr Jean-Pascal Zanders of Belgium, will brief the Council on the ABEO's work at that session.
32. On a related note, the Secretariat has sought to extend the OPCW's reach through social media by launching #CatalystForPeace. As the Secretariat's first internally launched social media initiative, #CatalystForPeace has already drawn interest, and will provide a useful platform for promoting OPCW events in the future. I encourage you to participate in the campaign, as well as to include your senior officials.
33. The OPCW celebrated its nineteenth anniversary from 2 to 4 May by commemorating, for the first time, the International Day for the Foundation of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons—now known as OPCW Day. The centrepiece of this event was the conference “Chemical Safety and Security in a Technologically Evolving World”, which attracted over 200 experts, officials, practitioners, scientists, educators, and students from across the globe, including a Nobel Prize laureate in Chemistry. In addition to its interactive format, the conference featured a poster session.
34. I hope that this conference has established a firm footing for similarly engaging events for celebrating the many achievements of our organisation on OPCW Days in the future.
35. On 17 May, the Secretariat organised a symposium on Women in Chemistry at OPCW Headquarters, which was followed by a three-day basic analytical chemistry course for women chemists at the OPCW Laboratory. The symposium attracted some 70 participants from 41 countries, representing government, the scientific community, chemical industry, academia, and civil society. At the request of participants, the Secretariat created a Facebook group, “OPCW Women in Chemistry,” to provide a platform for women chemists to network and share information.
36. To explore alternatives to the use of toxic and scheduled chemicals in industry, the Secretariat organised an Expert Group Meeting on Green Chemistry at OPCW Headquarters on 15 April. The participants, comprising prominent experts from academia, industry, and international organisations, recommended active engagement by the OPCW in the promotion of green chemistry for peace and sustainability, especially through its capacity-building and outreach initiatives.
37. As you will be aware, I have conducted meetings with regional groups over recent weeks, which I intend to continue in the future. I hope that your delegations find these meetings as useful as I do, given the important perspectives that they provide on issues of topical interest.

38. Over the intersessional period, I have received a number of high-level visitors at the OPCW. Such visits are valuable for enhancing exchanges on the OPCW's important mission, and I encourage you to direct dignitaries from your country to call at the OPCW in the course of their visits to The Hague.
39. In a welcome development, a bilateral agreement on privileges and immunities between Hungary and the OPCW entered into force on 25 May. I take this opportunity to remind States Parties that have not yet concluded or ratified such agreements of the value of doing so at the earliest opportunity, especially in light of recent experience that has amply demonstrated their operational value.
40. Turning to administrative issues, last week I presented the Draft Programme and Budget for 2017 (EC-83/CRP.1, dated 8 July 2015). This document endeavours to meet current and emerging challenges through new and adapted measures, based on zero nominal growth in the regular budget. The Secretariat looks forward to a constructive discussion with States Parties on this document over the coming weeks.
41. The Secretariat has also taken note of States Parties' concerns in relation to the cash flow situation and will make a presentation on this issue under the relevant agenda item. I reiterate, in this regard, my appeal to all States Parties that are in arrears with their assessed contributions for 2014 and 2015 to make full payment as soon as possible.
42. The Secretariat is committed to working with States Parties and other key stakeholders to ensure that we are attracting the best people to fulfil the OPCW's mission into the future. To this end, representatives of the Human Resources Branch will make a presentation in the margins of this session of the Council to outline the recruitment process for the Secretariat and to indicate how States Parties can help us to achieve an effective and efficient Organisation. I hope as many of you as possible will attend.
43. I take this opportunity to inform delegates that the Legal Adviser, Mr Olufemi Elias, will be leaving office at the end of this session of the Council. I would like to thank Mr Elias for his valuable contribution and wish him well in his future endeavours.
44. I would also like to welcome three new Directors to the Technical Secretariat: Ms Veronika Stromsíková, of the Office of Strategy and Policy; Mr Hamza Khelif, of the International Cooperation and Assistance Division; and Mr Kai Chen, of the External Relations Division. I look forward to working closely with them and hope your delegations will continue to cooperate effectively with their divisions.

Madam Chairperson,

45. My report to the Council at its Eighty-Second Session is detailed. The full text of my statement will be circulated as an official document of this session.

Chemical demilitarisation and verification

46. As at 30 June 2016, the Secretariat had verified the destruction by the possessor States Parties of 65,175 metric tonnes (MTs), or 92.5% of all declared Category 1 chemical weapons.

Russian Federation

47. The Russian Federation had destroyed 37,492 MTs, or 93.81% of its declared Category 1 stockpile as at 30 June 2016. At the facility at Kizner, 3,271 MTs, or 56.93% of chemical agent, have been destroyed. The facility has completed the destruction of sarin-filled 140-mm calibre warheads and 19,346 hazardous munitions filled with sarin and soman. The facility is currently destroying soman-filled 122 mm warheads. Work is also under way to build the last train (Building 1041A) for the destruction of chemical weapons filled with lewisite. Destruction operations at this facility are scheduled to continue until December 2020.

United States of America

48. As at 30 June 2016, the Secretariat had verified the destruction by the United States of America of 24,925 MTs, or 89.80% of its declared Category 1 chemical weapons. The United States of America successfully completed the destruction of problematic mustard-filled munitions at the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (PCAPP) using the Explosive Destruction System (EDS). As at 30 June 2016, a total of 1,729 MTs of sulfur mustard, contained in mortar cartridges and projectiles, had been destroyed. In addition, the Secretariat verified the destruction of six chemical munitions containing 0.01632 MTs of unknown agent at the recovered chemical weapons destruction facility, Tooele Army Depot, during the reporting period.
49. The United States of America informed the Secretariat that systemisation at the PCAPP had now reached 98%. The extensive equipment testing performed during systemisation has identified the need for additional work to optimise the performance of several plant systems. The forecast date for the start of destruction operations has changed to September 2016.
50. Steps are being taken to ensure an earlier start date without compromising the safety of the community, staff, and environment. The Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (BGCAPP) has completed 100% of construction work and systemisation is currently at 51%. Similarly to Pueblo, the United States of America will supplement destruction efforts by the use of the static detonation chamber (SDC) to destroy chemical munitions considered unsafe for destruction at the BGCAPP facility. Construction work and systemisation for the SDC are now respectively at 72% and 35% completion. The start of destruction operations at the SDC is scheduled for 2017.

Declarations

51. On 23 May, Angola submitted its outstanding initial declaration under both Article III and Article VI to the Technical Secretariat. Only one State Party has yet to submit its initial declaration.
52. The Secretariat continues to work with States Parties with regard to declarations of riot control agents. Such declarations have to be updated within 30 days after any changes have been made, and I encourage all States Parties to revise their statements on possession of riot control agents and to update their declarations accordingly.

53. The timely submission of ADPAs has improved over the last three years. This year, out of 90 States Parties with declarable facilities or activities, 79 States Parties, or 88%, have submitted their declarations on time. I welcome this positive trend, as the ADPA for 2015 marked the highest number of timely ADPA submissions to date. I encourage States Parties to continue providing timely and accurate declarations to the Secretariat.

Electronic declarations tool for National Authorities

54. The electronic declarations tool for National Authorities (EDNA) has become the primary software tool for preparing electronic declarations. For ADPA 2015, the Secretariat received the highest number of electronic declarations: 58 declarations (or 64%) out of 90 were submitted, fully or partially, in electronic format and 53 of them were prepared using EDNA. The Secretariat continues its efforts to improve this tool and address issues reported by States Parties.

OPCW Laboratory

55. In May, staff of the OPCW Laboratory presented two courses at the Rijswijk training facility. One course, an introduction to proficiency testing, was given to scientists from two Member States, and the second course, focusing on Convention-related chemical analysis, was presented to eight candidates from Member States as part of the Women in Chemistry symposium.

Inspectorate training

56. During the intersessional period, the Capacity-Building and Contingency Planning Cell of the Inspectorate Division provided 16 training courses comprising 552 inspector days and 350 instructor days to a total of 166 participants. The training programme comprised the continuation of the mandatory initial training for inspectors of Group O, including one-week mock inspection training for chemical weapons munition specialists at an old chemical weapons storage and destruction site in Italy, and for chemical production technologists in Spain. These courses were organised in cooperation with the National Authorities of Italy and Spain, respectively.
57. Since the last Council session, Bulgaria has hosted a “Safe and Secure Approach in Field Environments and Contingency Operations” course required for personnel deployed to high security risk areas, and OPCW premises have been used to conduct a specialised course in the area of non-destructive evaluation techniques.
58. The United States of America has provided initial and refresher course sessions on “Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response”, which are mandatory under United States regulations for inspectors deployed to United States chemical weapons destruction facilities.
59. The Capacity-Building and Contingency Planning Cell instructors have organised and delivered the annual toxic chemical training refresher course with the support of the National Authority of Slovakia.

60. The Inspectorate also provided several inductions, as well as safety and pre-deployment courses for newly rehired inspectors, which are required prior to their first mission deployments.
61. I would like to thank Bulgaria, Italy, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Spain, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America for technical and in-kind support, as well as for financial contributions, which have facilitated these inspector training programmes.

Article VI inspections

62. To date, 89 inspections involving S&A have been conducted, of which two were at OCPF sites and one at a Schedule 3 site. A total of 22 States Parties have already hosted at least one S&A inspection at a Schedule 2 plant site.
63. Despite the challenges presented by undertaking S&A activities during Schedule 3 inspections, which are limited to 24 hours, the Secretariat has optimised procedures before trials commenced, and has since successfully completed the first Schedule 3 S&A inspection.
64. S&A inspections have proven invaluable in further developing the Secretariat's logistical, scientific, and technical skills base, and have helped ensure our preparedness for dealing with challenge inspections or investigations of alleged use.
65. Consultations carried out under the Industry Cluster meeting and a technical meeting of experts held last week addressed the recommendations of SAB and topics relevant to Article VI verification activities, including mixtures of discrete organic chemicals, possible exemptions of OCPFs from declaration requirements, and use of S&A in Article VI inspections. Fruitful discussions on these topics advanced the common understanding of definitions and procedures aimed at improving the consistency of verification activities.

Implementation of OPCW Policy on Confidentiality

66. On 2 September 2015, I requested the Chairperson of the Executive Council to circulate a letter to the members of the Executive Council notifying them that I had opened an investigation into possible breaches of obligations to protect confidential information by former OPCW staff members. The investigation has been concluded, and in accordance with the OPCW Policy on Confidentiality, I am hereby notifying the Executive Council that the investigation report, in its modified form, is available to any State Party to collect on request.

Engagement with the chemical industry

67. The Secretariat has continued to engage with chemical industry representatives. In April, at the OPCW-ICCA Joint Steering Committee meeting, the decision was made to move forward with workshops on verification-related issues. In May, ICCA representatives delivered presentations during the inaugural OPCW Day event, and in June, ICCA representatives participated in the Sub-Working Group on Non-State Actors of the OEWG on Terrorism.

Scientific Advisory Board

68. The SAB has started preparations for its report on developments in science and technology to be submitted to the Fourth Review Conference,¹ covering the full breadth of the SAB's terms of reference. The first of its workshops to inform this report, on "Chemical Forensics: Capabilities across the Field and the Potential Applications in Chemical Weapons Convention Implementation" was held from 20 to 22 June in Helsinki, Finland, and co-organised with VERIFIN² with funding provided through EU Council Decision 2015/259. A second SAB workshop will be held in Paris, France, on 26 and 27 September on "Chemical Warfare Agents: Toxicity, Emergency Response and Medical Countermeasures", after which the SAB will meet for its Twenty-Fourth Session from 25 to 28 October. A briefing for States Parties will be held in the margins of this session of the SAB.
69. Additionally, during the Twenty-First Session of the Conference of the States Parties, to be held at the end of this year, the SAB Chairperson will report to States Parties on its two sessions held in 2016 and the two workshops held in Helsinki and Paris.
70. I would like to use this opportunity to encourage States Parties to respond favourably to my request for voluntary contributions to the SAB trust fund (S/1344/2016, dated 29 January 2016). I would like to thank the Government of New Zealand for the contribution received.

Medium-Term Plan

71. Earlier this year, the Secretariat issued the Medium-Term Plan (MTP) for the period from 2017 to 2021 (EC-83/S/1 C-21/S/1, dated 8 April 2016). The revision of the plan was undertaken to define a future vision for the Organisation based on a single strategic scenario. The MTP also contains medium-term goals for each of the results areas of the Organisation. For the first time ever, the MTP contains an Annex with a schematic representation of key elements in the mid-term implementation of the Convention, including the core objectives of the Organisation.

International cooperation and assistance

Implementation support

72. During the intersessional period, four regional meetings of National Authorities combined with regional meetings on education and outreach took place. I would like to thank the Islamic Republic of Iran, Lithuania, Paraguay, and South Africa for hosting these meetings.
73. The regional meetings on education and outreach highlighted the increasingly important role played by education and outreach in securing more effective and broad implementation of the Convention. The discussions were facilitated by the members of the ABEO, who provided guidance and support to the participants. States Parties'

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

² VERIFIN = Finnish Institute for Verification of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

representatives agreed to intensify their efforts to expand the reach of the Convention in universities, schools, scientific communities, and industry to help foster a culture of responsible use of chemistry.

74. At regional meetings of National Authorities, the discussions focused on issues related to national implementing legislation, strategies to bolster the implementation of the Convention, the MTP, and the OPCW's contribution to counter-terrorism.
75. As part of its efforts to strengthen enforcement of the transfers regime, the Secretariat organised a subregional training course for customs authorities from North, Central, and West Africa in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. The event was implemented with the EU funding within the framework of the OPCW Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa on the Chemical Weapons Convention (the Africa Programme).
76. The Technical Secretariat continues to develop cooperation with its international partners on issues related to non-proliferation. The Secretariat participated in the African Union's Review and Assistance Conference on the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) in Africa held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in April and in the regional workshop for Central Asian States on United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) "Legal/Regulatory Requirements for Strategic Trade Controls" held in Vienna, Austria, in May.
77. Earlier this year, the OPCW became a partner in the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education Partnership. On 5 and 6 July, in the framework of this partnership, the Director of the Office of Strategy and Policy attended the first Women Higher Education for Peace Vienna Forum, organised by the UNODA. The forum provided an opportunity to promote the professional engagement of women in the work of international institutions dealing with disarmament and non-proliferation issues.
78. Another example of strengthened cooperation with other international organisations is the proposed Memorandum of Understanding between the OPCW and the World Customs Organization, which is before the Council at this session. This Memorandum of Understanding will pave the way for a more meaningful cooperation between the two organisations in the area of non-proliferation of chemical weapons.
79. In terms of support for the drafting of legislation, the Secretariat reviewed and provided comments to draft legislation submitted by one State Party, and to the existing legislation of another State Party. Togo and Cameroon also submitted copies of their respective newly enacted legislation, which were reviewed by the Secretariat to determine whether they cover all of the initial measures required under the Convention.
80. The Secretariat participated in the third annual meeting of international organisations, organised by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, on the subject of international regulatory cooperation. During the meeting, the final results of the survey on the rule-making practices of international organisations were presented, to be incorporated in a report, which cited the OPCW internship programme for legal drafters and National Authority representatives as a successful example of a training programme on international regulatory cooperation.

Assistance and Protection Branch

81. The Secretariat continued to provide expert advice in order to assist States Parties in the improvement of their protective capabilities against chemical weapons and incidents involving toxic chemicals.
82. A new team of 31 first responders from 15 States Parties from the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC) region completed their full training cycle during the third regional exercise on chemical emergency response, which took place in Bogotá, Colombia, from 4 to 8 April, organised with the support of the National Authority of Colombia and other national institutions.
83. A regional advanced course and field exercise on emergency response against chemical weapons were held in Jakarta, Indonesia, from 4 to 8 April. The event was attended by 26 first responders from the Asia region and was co-organised by the Indonesian authorities.
84. A joint basic and advanced training course on assistance and protection for Russian-speaking States Parties was jointly organised by the Government of Belarus and the Technical Secretariat from 18 to 27 April at the Institute for Retraining and Professional Development (IRPD) in Svetlaya-Roshcha, Belarus. The training was attended by 16 participants from States Parties from Eastern Europe and Central Asia and initiated a full training cycle for them.
85. Thirty-five first response specialists from Arabic-speaking States Parties from the Middle East and North Africa attended a basic course on assistance and protection against chemical weapons from 24 to 28 April. The course was offered in conjunction with the Government of Oman under Article X of the Chemical Weapons Convention.
86. The 2016 training cycle for GRULAC States Parties continued from 25 to 29 April with the fifth advanced course on chemical emergency response, held in Buenos Aires, Argentina.
87. In coordination with the National Authority of Slovakia, a new edition of the international assistance and protection training for experts was held in Zemianske Kostol'any, Slovakia, from 2 to 12 May.
88. Seventeen instructors participated in a "train the trainer" course organised by the Civil Defence Institute in Lázně Bohdaneč, Czech Republic, from 18 to 25 May.
89. The subregional project for Central America and Mexico concluded with an exercise on chemical emergency response, jointly organised by the Technical Secretariat and the National Authority of Mexico and conducted in Guadalajara, Mexico, from 16 to 20 May. A new team of 16 first responders from nine GRULAC States Parties graduated from this course.
90. A new international basic course on assistance and protection was conducted from 30 May to 3 June in Ankara, Turkey, for group of 21 sponsored participants from different geographical regions.

91. The fourth edition of the specialised training course in conducting S&A in a highly contaminated environment was co-organised by the Technical Secretariat and the National Authority of Poland, and was held from 6 to 11 June in the city of Częstochowa, Poland, for a group of 16 participants from all geographical regions.
92. A new group of 16 Russian-speaking first responders graduated from the assistance and protection exercise that took place from 7 to 9 June at the IRPD in Svetlaya-Roshcha, Belarus.
93. The regional training cycle for police first responders that started in 2015 in Malaysia continued from 4 to 8 July 2016 in Seoul, Republic of Korea, with an advanced assistance and protection training course for the same group of trainees.
94. Activities within the framework of the Africa Programme continued to be implemented. In order to assess the progress made in the implementation of the project on chemical emergency response, planning, and management for East African Community partner states, which started in 2015, a national workshop and a regional mid-term review meeting were held consecutively from 25 to 29 April 2016 in Kigali, Rwanda.
95. Pursuant to paragraph 7 of Article X of the Convention, a voluntary contribution of EUR 10,000 was pledged by the Government of Mexico for the voluntary fund for assistance.
96. I take this opportunity to thank donors, as well as hosting and participating States Parties, for their valuable contributions to our assistance and protection capacity-building programmes and for their commitment to the implementation of the provisions of Article X of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

International Cooperation Branch

97. I am pleased to inform the Council that the 17th edition of the Associate Programme, which this year will accommodate 32 participants from 32 Member States, will commence on 29 July. Preparations are well under way, including for three-week industry placements. I would like to reiterate my gratitude to Member States and industry representatives for offering to host participants and providing valuable support.
98. I wish also to express my appreciation for the continuous support lent to us by various partners in the programme, including the World Customs Organization, the European Chemical Industry Council, the European Association of Chemical Distributors, the European Chemicals Agency, the customs authorities of the Netherlands, the City and the Port of Rotterdam, the University of Surrey in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the Technical University of Delft. The support of these institutions and others continues to be instrumental in the success of this OPCW flagship international cooperation programme.
99. The analytical skills development courses organised by the Technical Secretariat in collaboration with partner institutions have continued to be an area in increasing demand. In collaboration with VERIFIN, the Technical Secretariat conducted a laboratory skills enhancement programme on chromatography at the VERIFIN

- premises in Helsinki, Finland, from 9 to 20 May. Qualified analytical chemists from Botswana, Dominica, Ethiopia, and Serbia participated in the course.
100. Within the framework of the Africa Programme, the OPCW and Protechnik Laboratories co-organised an analytical chemistry course for African Member States in Pretoria, South Africa, from 16 to 27 May, attended by 24 participants from 15 African Member States.
 101. The sixth course on the analysis of chemicals related to the Chemical Weapons Convention in the framework of OPCW proficiency testing was held in Madrid, Spain, from 23 May to 3 June, and was offered in Spanish for 15 analytical chemistry practitioners from 12 Member States in the GRULAC region. The course, organised with the National Authority of Spain and the Spanish verification laboratory, the Laboratorio de Verificación de Armas Químicas (LAVEMA), further strengthened the skills of analytical chemists in the region and their awareness of the standards of analysis of chemicals under the Convention regime.
 102. Since the last session of the Council, two new fellowship programmes have been launched at VERIFIN and the University of Venice, Italy, by scientists from the Russian Federation and Ukraine. Preparations are ongoing for four more fellowships for nationals of Lesotho, Romania, South Africa, and Zambia to be implemented in institutions in Botswana, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. In addition, in July and August, two fellowships are expected to start at the OPCW Headquarters, with participation in in-house projects, green chemistry initiatives, and the development of e-learning tools for analytical chemists.
 103. In order to help aspiring institutions to prepare for the forthcoming proficiency tests, a basic proficiency test course was held from 9 to 13 May at the OPCW training facility in Rijswijk. Six participants attended from two institutions in Algeria and Pakistan. The programme provided basic training on standard procedures of using selected analytical techniques including gas chromatography, gas chromatography-mass spectrometry, and element-specific mass detectors. The expertise acquired by participants will facilitate their institutions' qualification to join the OPCW designated laboratories network.
 104. The first laboratory twinning initiative was launched this year, enabling analytical chemistry laboratories aspiring to receive OPCW designation status to build international partnerships with more advanced laboratories. The first pair of twinned laboratories is the Institute of Chemistry of the University of Belgrade, Serbia, and VERIFIN in Finland.
 105. Since the last session of the Council, a total of 22 participants have been sponsored under the Conference-Support Programme to attend four conferences on the following topics: the "14th Laboratory Managers Workshop In East and Southern Africa" held in Kampala, Uganda, from 21 to 25 March; the "CBRN Science and Consequence Management Congress", held in Tbilisi, Georgia, from 30 May to 2 June; the 49th course on "High Pressure Crystallography – Status Artis and Emerging Opportunities", held in Erice (Trapani), Italy, from 28 May to 4 June; and the "6th International Congress on Arsenic in the Environment (AS2016)" held in Stockholm, Sweden, from 19 to 23 June.

106. The Government of Germany, the OPCW, and the Bergische Universität Wuppertal jointly organised two parallel training courses on chemical-safety management for Member States in the Africa region, the Asia region, and the GRULAC region from 4 to 8 April. A total of 23 participants from 22 countries successfully completed these courses.
107. The Government of Brazil hosted a chemical safety and security programme for the GRULAC region in Sao Paulo, Brazil, from 18 to 20 April. Participants included 38 experts from 16 Member States. The group was diverse as it included government officials responsible for regulating chemical industry, chemical industry representatives, academics, and chemists.
108. The Technical Secretariat organised, in collaboration with Cyprus, the first workshop on chemical safety and security for Arabic-speaking OPCW Member States from the North Africa, Middle East, and Gulf subregions. The course was held in Nicosia, Cyprus, from 24 to 26 May and hosted 16 participants from 12 Member States.
109. In addition, the Secretariat co-organised with the D. Mendeleev University of Chemical Technology of Russia a training workshop on best practices to develop the Responsible Care® programme in the chemical industry, held in Moscow, Russian Federation, from 14 to 18 March. The new programme was offered in the Russian language for States Parties in Central Asia and Eastern Europe. Fourteen specialists from six States Parties attended the workshop.
110. The Secretariat has launched a new survey on needs assessment and best practices in chemical safety and security management. Member States have been invited to share specific needs in chemical safety and security management, as well as to provide information on existing tools, guidance, and best practices in this area. Fourteen States Parties have provided their input, which will contribute to a report on the survey and a compilation of best practices. The Secretariat continues to encourage interested States Parties to provide their input.
111. In the framework of promoting the peaceful uses of chemistry and in order to facilitate the understanding of States Parties' relevant trade and export control policies, the OPCW co-organised with the Government of China the first seminar on "Chemical Trade: Current Practices and Challenges" on 16 and 17 June in Rizhao City, China. The seminar provided an opportunity for States Parties to share information, experiences, and best practices on trade and export control.
112. The OPCW participated in the "Inter-agency Meeting on Sound Chemicals Management" and the 45th meeting of the Inter-Organisation Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals/Inter-Organization Coordination Committee, which was held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 10 to 12 May. Secretariat representatives shared their experience in relation to chemical safety and security, gender mainstreaming, and green chemistry, which are considered as potential contributors to the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, in line with the OPCW's mandate to promote the peaceful uses of chemistry.
113. Preparations are ongoing for the regional workshop on policy and diplomacy for scientists in cooperation with The World Academy of Sciences and the Academy of Science of South Africa. The workshop is offered to African Member States and will

take place in Pretoria, South Africa, from 18 to 20 October. The event will be the first OPCW science diplomacy initiative designed especially for scientists working in the fields of chemistry or biology converging with chemistry. Young scientists will gain knowledge of various policy-related aspects touching on their scientific disciplines, such as the dual uses of science, international treaties, and related work of international organisations with implications for science. Issues of responsible research, ethics, and the sustainability of science will also be discussed.

External relations

114. During the intersessional period we have welcomed 10 new Permanent Representatives to the OPCW, from Algeria, Bhutan, China, France, Honduras, Italy, Japan, Laos, Lesotho, and Viet Nam.
115. I have hosted a number of high-level visitors, including H.E. Mr Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations; the Hon. Stéphane Dion, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada; H.E. Dr Mohammad Javad Zarif, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran; H.E. Mr Nikola Poposki, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; H.E. Mr Carlos Foradori, Deputy Foreign Minister of Argentina; H.E. Ms Lone Dencker Wisborg, Secretary of State for Foreign Policy of Denmark; H.E. Ms Rose Gottemoeller, Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security of the United States of America; Mr Wegger Strømmen, Secretary-General of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and Dr Lassina Zerbo, Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization.
116. Since the last session of the Council I have visited Moscow, Russian Federation, where I met with Foreign Minister Lavrov. I addressed the NATO Conference on Weapons of Mass Destruction, Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation in Ljubljana, Slovenia, and met with Ms Darja Bavdaž Kuret, Slovenia's State Secretary, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In Cyprus, I opened a chemical safety and security workshop for North Africa and Middle Eastern countries and met with H.E. Mr Ioannis Kasoulidis, Minister of Foreign Affairs and H.E. Mr Christoforos Fokaides, Minister of Defence of Cyprus. In May, I delivered a keynote speech at the 19th International Chemical Weapons Demilitarisation Conference held in London, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and met with Mr Tobias Ellwood, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.
117. The Deputy Director-General addressed the opening plenary sitting of the Global Summit on Chemical Safety and Security, held in Kielce, Poland, in April. While in Poland, he also met with H.E. Ms Joanna Wronecka, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. In May, the Deputy Director-General attended the United Nations Security Council 1540 Committee informal meeting on the 2016 Comprehensive Review in Madrid, Spain.
118. In June, the Deputy Director-General opened the "Seminar on Chemical Trade: Current Practices and Challenges", which was held in China, and met with H.E. Kong Xuanyou, Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs. Later that month, the Deputy Director-General attended the United Nations open consultations on the 2016

Comprehensive Review of resolution 1540 (2004). While in New York, he met with the Chargé d’Affaires of South Sudan to the United Nations and discussed South Sudan’s progress in joining the Convention.

119. To further extend the OPCW’s reach and coordination with other international organisations on communications and public affairs issues, the Technical Secretariat engaged with the principal communicators across the United Nations, its agencies, and other international organisations similar to the OPCW during the annual United Nations Communications Group principals meeting in Vienna, Austria, on 28 June.
120. During the intersessional period, planning continued to ensure resourcing and appropriate partners to support the necessary overhaul of the official OPCW website. The Secretariat anticipates that the new website will be launched in 2017.
121. The Secretariat has extended the impact and reach of both OPCW Day and Women in Chemistry events through the use of social media. To further extend the reach of OPCW Day proceedings, the opening and closing ceremonies were webcast and these videos, along with a retrospective of the conference, can be viewed on the official OPCW Day website (opcwday.org).
122. *Combustion Man*, the fourth film in the OPCW’s FIRES documentary film project, premiered during OPCW Day and included a panel discussion featuring two protagonists from other FIRES films. The film centres on the theme of science for peace through its portrayal of an academic researching safer methods for eliminating chemical weapons. *Combustion Man* is the first of three films to be produced, distributed, and promoted with the generous support of the European Union.
123. One of the side events of the OPCW Day included a photo exhibition featuring OPCW inspectors. The exhibition also featured portraits of people from across the world connected to the OPCW’s FIRES documentary film project, whose personal aims intertwine with those of the OPCW.
124. As I have mentioned, shortly after OPCW Day, the Secretariat launched its new social media campaign, #CatalystForPeace. The initial content for the campaign came from interviewing and featuring participants in the Women in Chemistry Symposium (#WomenInChemistry). A short two-minute video has also been developed to direct viewers to a new “Discover” page on the OPCW website that serves to educate and engage visitors about the OPCW (opcw.org/discover). This video also aims to encourage more women to apply for employment at the OPCW.

Administrative and financial matters

125. Our ability to meet core objectives continues to depend on receiving assessed contributions from States Parties. As at 30 June, 95.7% of annual contributions had been collected for 2015, compared to 94.8% as at 31 December 2015. Thirty-three States Parties that have not been paying their assessed contributions lost their voting rights on 1 January 2016. The Secretariat stands ready to provide these States Parties with a multi-year payment plan should they wish to settle their outstanding balances in instalments.
126. With an increase in unreimbursed Article IV and V verification activities and a higher than normal programme implementation in 2015, the Secretariat has borrowed

EUR 7.1 million from the Working Capital Fund and a special enterprise-resource planning (ERP) fund, of which EUR four million has been repaid to the Working Capital Fund in 2016 in line with the Financial Rules and Regulations.

127. As at 30 June 2016, the collection rate for the 2016 assessed annual contributions stood at 74%, which is lower than 77.7% on the same date in 2015. In addition, we are still EUR 4.8 million short in contributions to the 2015 budget, including EUR 4.4 million of unreimbursed Articles IV and V verification costs.
128. These discrepancies continue to create financial challenges to the Secretariat. As you may note from the monthly financial situation report which has been circulated (S/1396/2016, dated 8 July 2016), the Secretariat may need to withdraw an additional EUR 4.2 million from the Working Capital Fund before the end of 2016, unless all outstanding contributions are made by States Parties.
129. The 2015 Financial Statements for both the OPCW and the Provident Fund were audited and certified by the External Auditor of the OPCW in May and both received unqualified audit opinions. The Financial Statements reported a final cash deficit for 2014 of EUR 0.7 million, meaning that instead of distributing cash surplus to States Parties, the Secretariat will have to discuss how the cash deficit will be shared by States Parties. This matter was raised in June at the last session of the Advisory Body on Administrative and Financial Matters.
130. The Draft Programme and Budget for 2017 is now available to you (EC-83/CRP.1, dated 8 July 2016). We have sought to set out a programme of work for 2017 that understands the need for adaptability to meet current, emerging, and future challenges under budgetary constraints. To this end, the Programme and Budget has once again been formulated following the principles of results-based management, wherein our programme results are directly linked to resources.
131. A key focus of our planning approach for 2017 has also been to ensure that our programmes of work are in line with the strategic direction of the Organisation, as detailed in the updated MTP and the recommendations of the Third Review Conference.³ In order to optimise the use of resources we will also continue to strengthen our programme planning and performance management policies and procedures, placing particular focus on monitoring, evaluation, and risk management.
132. The ERP project has recommended a core solution that provides the best functional fit and the lowest total cost of ownership. In accordance with the revised ERP selection methodology, the additional components outside the core solution are in the process of being identified prior to the initiation of a procurement process. After the contracts have been signed for the core solution, the Organisation will initiate a process to select an implementation partner, with the implementation phase of the project expected to start in the second half of 2016.

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³ Third Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.