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11 – 14 July 2017

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### **OPENING STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AT ITS EIGHTY-FIFTH SESSION**

Mr Chairperson,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,

1. I welcome you to the Eighty-Fifth Session of the Executive Council.
2. I should like to congratulate the new Chairperson of the Council, Ambassador Sheikh Mohammed Belal, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh, who, I am confident, will ably lead the work of the Council. The Secretariat and I will extend every support to Ambassador Belal during his tenure. Furthermore, I should like to extend a word of welcome to the new Vice-Chairpersons. I also thank the outgoing Chairperson, Ambassador Odette Melono of Cameroon, for her skilful leadership of the Council.
3. The period since the last Council session has marked a time of milestones, progress, and events of great concern.
4. As delegates are aware, the Fifty-Fifth Meeting of the Executive Council was convened on 5 July to discuss the reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) regarding the incidents in Um-Housh in September 2016 and in Khan Shaykhun in April this year. As I reported, the FFM has concluded that sulfur mustard was involved in the incident in Um-Housh, Aleppo, on 16 September 2016 (S/1491/2017, dated 1 May 2017). The FFM report of 29 June (S/1510/2017) concluded that sarin was used as a chemical weapon in Khan Shaykhun. The FFM reports on both incidents have been submitted to the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM). I strongly condemn the continued use of chemical weapons in Syria, which has killed and injured innocent civilians. It is a blatant violation of the norms of the Convention.
5. As these recent findings make clear, the mandate of the OPCW remains as critical today as when it was founded. This year, while we mark the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the founding of the OPCW, we must collectively ensure that the global norm against chemical weapons we have forged together is upheld and fortified. This can only be done by holding accountable those responsible for chemical weapons attacks.

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\* Reissued for technical reasons.



6. On 26 April, a commemorative ceremony to observe the twentieth anniversary was held in The Hague. Permanent Representatives and other delegates from OPCW Member States, international organisations, and civil society, were in attendance to mark the occasion. The proceedings were conducted in the presence of His Majesty King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands and included the participation of Her Royal Highness Crown Princess Victoria of Sweden, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, the Mayor of The Hague, and the Chairperson of the Conference of the States Parties.
7. The ceremony acknowledged the OPCW's progress in verifiably eliminating chemical weapons, as well as its efforts to prevent their re-emergence and to promote chemistry for peaceful use. I take this opportunity to thank those States Parties that are supporting the twentieth anniversary year and the mission of the OPCW by hosting and participating in related events. To date, 18 events have been hosted by States Parties from all regional groups. A further nine events are planned so far for the rest of the year. These events raise awareness with States Parties and other stakeholders about the work of the OPCW and the goals of the Chemical Weapons Convention. I reiterate my invitation to all other States Parties to organise and participate in events marking the anniversary throughout 2017.
8. Our important work in Syria continues on several fronts. In accordance with paragraph 11 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5 (dated 11 November 2016), a report on the first inspections at the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the Syrian Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC) was issued on 2 June (EC-85/DG.16). As mentioned in this report, the Secretariat has commenced planning for the second inspections of these facilities, to be conducted in the second half of 2017.
9. The Secretariat continues its efforts to clarify all outstanding issues regarding the initial declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic. As I have reported to the Executive Council, there are still a number of issues to be resolved. We have asked the Syrian Arab Republic to provide the necessary documents that may help to clarify them. I intend to invite Deputy Foreign Minister Dr Mekdad for a new round of consultations. However, I need to be assured that these consultations will produce tangible results.
10. The last remaining aircraft hangar in Syria was verified as destroyed on 6 June. Since the security situation may now allow safe access for the Secretariat to confirm the condition of the last two stationary above-ground facilities, plans are being made to verify these sites. The contract with the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) has been extended until the end of December to ensure that the necessary administrative and logistical support is provided for the OPCW's work. As in the past, I am pleased to note that this support will also be extended to the JIM.
11. The most recent report on the progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme has already been made available to delegations (EC-85/DG.21, dated 23 June 2017). I thank all States Parties that have made voluntary contributions to support the continuation of our important work in Syria.
12. At the request of the Iraqi National Authority, a technical assistance visit (TAV) was conducted in Iraq from 17 to 22 June. The Technical Secretariat team assisted the

Iraqi National Authority with its investigations into the allegations of use of chemical weapons by ISIS in Iraq. The TAV team received environmental and biomedical samples from the Iraqi National Authority. The samples have been transferred to the OPCW Laboratory for analysis.

13. Progress on the destruction of remaining chemical weapons continues and, as at 30 June, it had reached 95.7% of declared Category 1 chemical weapons.
14. The Kizner facility in the Russian Federation has continued to make significant progress and the destruction of all soman and sarin-filled chemical weapons is now complete. The facility will continue with the destruction of the last three types of munitions filled with Vx. The Russian Federation plans to start the destruction operations of the last two types of munitions filled with lewisite in July. I am pleased to note that completion of this task will mark the full destruction of the Russian Federation's declared stockpile.
15. The Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (PCAPP) in the United States of America is making steady progress and is expected to complete destruction by 2020. The construction and systemisation of the remaining destruction facilities, the Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (BGCAPP) and the BGCAPP Static Detonation Chamber (SDC), continue. The United States hosted an Executive Council delegation at the Blue Grass facility from 2 to 6 April.
16. Progress on the destruction of Libya's remaining Category 2 chemical weapons at the GEKA mbH<sup>1</sup> facility in Munster, Germany, is advancing. As at 30 June, Secretariat inspection teams had concluded five inspections and had verified the destruction of 238.66 metric tonnes (MT) of tributylamine, 18 MT of 2 chloroethanol, 3.2 MT of phosphorous trichloride, and 10.6 MT of thionyl chloride. Destruction operations are expected to be completed by the end of this year.
17. The Secretariat remains in contact with the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) to assess the possibility of Secretariat inspectors travelling to Libya for further chemical analysis of the tank farm at Ruwagha. Currently, the security situation does not permit the deployment of inspectors. The Secretariat has concluded a contract with UNOPS to obtain the services of a Libyan firm to destroy the contents of the one remaining tank that experienced an exothermic reaction during reloading.
18. In Iraq, progress is being made at the Al Muthana site on the encapsulation of Bunker 13. In Bunker 13, the Secretariat will be able to confirm the flow and height of the concrete with the emplacement of eight cameras inside and around the bunker.
19. Activities continue in relation to the excavation, recovery, and destruction of chemical weapons abandoned by Japan on the territory of China. Over the intersessional period, the Secretariat conducted one inspection at Haerbaling. The Secretariat continues to work closely with Chinese and Japanese authorities. In this regard, a tripartite meeting was held in Tokyo on 24 and 25 March. Furthermore, China and Japan jointly

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<sup>1</sup> GEKA mbH = Gesellschaft zur Entsorgung von chemischen Kampfstoffen und Rüstungsaltslasten mbH.

welcomed an Executive Council visit to Beijing and the Haerbaling site between 12 and 16 June.

20. As we approach the goal of complete destruction of declared chemical weapons, we sharpen our focus on preventing re-emergence. Enhancements to our verification regime strengthen the effectiveness of our abilities in this regard. To improve our systems and analytical capacity, we have further strengthened the electronic declarations tool for National Authorities (EDNA). The training and support provided on the use of EDNA have led to an increase in the absolute number of declarations submitted in electronic format and in the overall percentage of data declared electronically. I want to take this opportunity to reiterate my call to States Parties to consider using the Secure Information Exchange (SIX) system to facilitate the efficient and secure exchange of information with the Secretariat.
21. With the increasing demand to support different types of non-routine operations, we have expanded the Capacity-Building and Contingency-Planning Cell in the Inspectorate. The goal is to be able to deploy teams of inspectors to conduct contingency operation missions, provide technical support to the capacity-building programmes of the International Cooperation and Assistance Division, train inspectors and other personnel, and be ready to provide assistance to States Parties under Article X, including deployments of the Rapid Response Assistance Mission (RRAM), as needed. The RRAM can be deployed at the request of States Parties to quickly provide emergency assistance in the case of use of chemical weapons against them. I thank Italy for offering to provide transport capacity to the RRAM, and encourage other States Parties in a position to do so, to provide similar support. Additionally, the Operations Centre and Information Cell have been combined into a Situation Centre. This centre will collect, analyse, and disseminate, as appropriate, information related to the use, or potential use, of chemical weapons.
22. The second meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on Terrorism in 2017 was held yesterday under the chairmanship of Ambassador María Teresa Infante of Chile. The discussions highlighted the importance of the full and effective implementation of national legislation based on the Convention and of extra-territorial jurisdiction in States Parties' penal codes in countering chemical terrorism. I thank the Netherlands and Uganda for sharing their experiences. The 7 June meeting of the Sub-Working Group on Non-State Actors, also facilitated by Ambassador Infante, focused on the issue of customs security. I am pleased that the OEWG is providing a platform for sharing best practices, and I am confident that the OPCW can play an increasingly significant role in counter-terrorism efforts. I thank Panama and Singapore for sharing their experiences in this area and invite other States Parties to do the same. I also thank Ambassador Momar Diop, Permanent Representative of Senegal, and Ambassador Infante for their leadership on these issues, and I look forward to the results of their recently issued joint programme of work, which maps out an agenda for discussions over the next 12 months.
23. From 20 to 23 June, the Technical Secretariat, in cooperation with the World Customs Organization (WCO), organised for the second time a training-of-trainers course on the technical aspects of the transfers regime at OPCW Headquarters for representatives of customs training institutions. It is aimed at strengthening ownership

and enhancing sustainability regarding the training of customs officers on the enforcement of the transfers regime relating to scheduled chemicals.

24. The Technical Secretariat gave a presentation on the review of the inspector rehiring programme to the Advisory Body on Administrative and Financial Matters (ABAF) at its June session. The presentation was designed to assist the ABAF in producing its recommendations to the Council on the rehiring of inspectors, as mandated by the Conference of the States Parties in paragraph 10 of its decision C-19/DEC.11 (dated 4 December 2014).
25. In association with the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC), the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) held a workshop from 3 to 5 July in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on emerging technologies with relevance to the Convention. The workshop reviewed innovative technologies with the potential for enhancing capabilities in the real-time recognition of chemical changes. The report will be circulated as a working paper of the forthcoming Twenty-Sixth Session of the SAB, in October.
26. The SAB met for its Twenty-Fifth Session from 27 to 31 March. The report of the Session (SAB-25/1, dated 31 March 2017) has been circulated to States Parties, along with my response (EC-85/DG.8, dated 19 May 2017 and Corr.1, dated 31 May 2017).
27. I thank the SAB for reviewing and adopting terms of reference for its temporary working group (TWG) on investigative science and technology and congratulate Dr Veronica Borrett on her appointment as Chairperson. The group will begin its work in the first quarter of 2018. The objective of this TWG is to review science and technology relevant to investigations such as those mandated under Articles IX and X of the Convention.
28. The Open-Ended Working Group on the Future Priorities of the OPCW has held four meetings since the last session of the Council. Two of these meetings addressed capacity building, and two dealt with important aspects of engaging external stakeholders. Presentations by external experts provided a range of perspectives that should stimulate deliberations within the group. I encourage the active engagement of all States Parties in the work on future priorities.
29. I have written to States Parties informing them about the fourth annual OPCW-The Hague Award. A call for nominations has been issued on the official OPCW website and through our social media channels. This year's award will be based on updated rules and procedures, with a view to increasing the number of nominations of outstanding candidates. I invite all concerned to consider submitting nominations of suitably qualified candidates. The deadline for submitting proposals is 15 September.
30. This year's edition of the induction workshop for diplomatic personnel involved in the work of the OPCW will be held on 29 September. We look forward to welcoming newly arrived colleagues at the OPCW Headquarters for a day of briefings and interaction with Technical Secretariat representatives.
31. The confidentiality reform task force assembled in January to provide advice on modifications to the OPCW confidentiality regime completed its assignment on 1 June. Its recommended amendments to the OPCW Policy on Confidentiality, the

OPCW Media and Public Affairs Policy, and related internal regulations have been made available to delegations for consideration (EC-85/DEC/CRP.5 and EC-85/DEC/CRP.6, both dated 23 June 2017).

32. In terms of international cooperation and assistance, the Secretariat has continued to provide support to improve legislation development and adoption, as well as safety, security, and response capacities to the use, or threat of use, of chemical weapons.
33. The fourth phase of the Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa on the Chemical Weapons Convention (the Africa Programme) has been launched and will run from 2017 to 2019. This phase uses a results-based management approach, with the aim of securing greater ownership and sustainability of the programme at the national and regional levels. The Secretariat is developing documents that will outline activities to fulfil the objectives of the programme.
34. The OPCW Laboratory is critical to our ability to provide capacity-building support to States Parties. I believe it should be expanded and better equipped to ensure that it has state-of-the-art methods and technologies for sampling and analysis (S&A) at its disposal. This will enhance capacity, both internally and externally, including through research and training. Training of external experts, in turn, will strengthen the skill sets available in laboratories around the world, with a view to increasing the number of designated laboratories. I have circulated a concept paper with further details on the proposed Laboratory enhancement project. Voluntary contributions will be sought to support this project.
35. Turning to administrative matters, States Parties will be pleased to note that the 2016 Financial Statements, both for the OPCW and the Provident Fund, were audited and certified by the External Auditor of the OPCW and both received unqualified opinions. This confirms the External Auditor's assessment that the Financial Statements are compliant with International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) and reveal no material weaknesses.
36. The 2016 Financial Statements have reported a cash surplus for 2015 of EUR 2 million. This surplus, as well as the previously reported cash deficit for 2014 of EUR 0.7 million, will be considered by the Executive Council.
37. Last week I presented the Draft Programme and Budget for 2018, which is now available (EC-86/CRP.1, dated 7 July 2017). As in previous years, the Programme and Budget has been developed to cost-effectively deliver tangible results in line with the OPCW's core objectives. To this end, the Programme and Budget has once again been formulated following the principles of results-based management and zero nominal growth. As is the practice, budget consultations will be forthcoming.
38. As you will recall, the Secretariat has been exploring the possibility of introducing a Junior Professional Officer (JPO) Programme. This concept has been met with a positive response from States Parties. Consequently, a Secretariat Note has been circulated (S/1513/2017, dated 10 July 2017), providing the details of the implementation of this programme at the OPCW. Tentatively, the first group of JPOs could be appointed in early 2018. I invite all States Parties wishing to participate in this programme to contact the Human Resources Branch to conclude the necessary agreement.

39. Mr Chairperson, my report to the Council at its Eighty-Fifth Session is detailed. The full text of my statement will be circulated to delegations as an official document of this session.

### **Chemical demilitarisation and verification**

40. As at 30 June 2017, the Secretariat had verified the destruction by the possessor States Parties of 67,470 MT, or 95.7% of all declared Category 1 chemical weapons.

#### Russian Federation

41. As at 30 June 2017, the Russian Federation had destroyed 39,967 MT, or 99.1% of its declared Category 1 stockpile. The Kizner facility has so far destroyed 5,372 MT, or 93.5% of chemical warfare agent. The loading of the last train in Building 1041A, for the destruction of chemical weapons filled with lewisite, is now complete. The Secretariat performed the final engineering review of this new building in June, and agreed with the Russian Federation on amendments and modifications to the agreed detailed plan for verification and facility agreement, respectively. These two documents have been submitted to the Executive Council for consideration and approval at this session (EC-85/P/DEC/CRP.2, dated 7 June 2017 and EC-85/P/DEC/CRP.3, dated 6 June 2017).

#### United States of America

42. As at 30 June 2017, the United States of America had destroyed 25,115 MT, or 90.4% of its declared Category 1 chemical weapons. The PCAPP facility has so far destroyed 193.38 MT of mustard agent. In parallel, the facility has reconfigured mustard agent-filled M60 105-mm boxed munitions. During the reporting period, the PCAPP facility has conducted assessments and repairs to some parts of its technological equipment. In addition, the United States has destroyed 0.00531MT of unknown agent at the Recovered Chemical Weapons Destruction Facility – Savanna Army Depot Activity (SVDA), Illinois.
43. The BGCAPP has completed 100% of construction work and systemisation is currently at 46.5%. Similarly to Pueblo, the United States of America will supplement destruction efforts by the use of the SDC to destroy chemical munitions considered unsafe for destruction at the BGCAPP facility. The BGCAPP SDC construction and systemisation work has been paused while the overall schedule is under review to ensure the most efficient application of resources.

#### Libya

44. As at 30 June 2017, Libya had destroyed 100%, or 26.345 MT of its Category 1 chemical weapons and 81.25%, or 959.626 MT of its Category 2 chemical weapons.

### **Declarations**

45. Only one State Party has not yet submitted its initial declaration and the Secretariat will continue to liaise with this State Party in this regard. Declarations of riot control agents from 14 States Parties are still under clarification. I take this opportunity to

encourage all States Parties to review their respective declarations on riot control agents and to update them when necessary, as required by the Convention.

46. As at 31 May, 86 States Parties with declarable facilities or declarable activities had submitted their annual declarations on past activities for 2016. Of these 86 States Parties, 76 or (88%) had submitted their declarations by the deadline of 31 March 2017. A report on timely submission of declarations under Article VI for the period from 1 January to 31 May 2017 has been provided for consideration at this session (EC-85/DG.17, dated 16 June 2017).

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

47. At its Fourteenth Session, the Conference of the States Parties adopted decision C-14/DEC.4 (dated 2 December 2009), on guidelines regarding concentration limits for mixtures containing Schedule 2A and Schedule 2A\* chemicals. It requires that States Parties implement the guidelines as soon as practicable. As at 14 February 2017, 60 States Parties had informed the Secretariat of their status of implementation by responding to at least one of the six surveys conducted since 2011. Of these, 41 States Parties indicated that they had implemented the decision and 19 States Parties indicated that they had yet to do so.

#### Cooperation with the World Customs Organization

48. In the framework of the ongoing cooperation with the WCO, the 2017 edition of the Harmonized System Convention now includes the allocation of international codes to 33 of the most traded scheduled chemicals. This will assist customs authorities in identifying scheduled chemicals, allowing more accurate and complete trade declarations, with a view to eliminating transfer discrepancies.
49. In a new phase of this cooperation, the OPCW is now working with the WCO towards the inclusion of an additional group of 15 of the most traded scheduled chemicals in the forthcoming 2022 edition of the Harmonized System Convention. To this end, the WCO has provisionally adopted amendments to the nomenclature at the last session of the Harmonized System Review Sub-Committee, held on 29 May 2017.

#### Laboratories

50. In March, I visited the OPCW Laboratory, where the newly acquired nuclear magnetic resonance spectrometer was demonstrated. This instrument will expand and augment the Laboratory's chemical analysis capabilities. This is our first step to strengthening and enhancing our analytical capabilities.
51. Our designated laboratory system remains strong. We have a total of 23 laboratories from 17 Member States in our expert network. Of these 23 laboratories, 14 are designated for both biomedical and environmental analysis, six for environmental analysis only, and three for biomedical analysis only.
52. As for the various exercises conducted with our network, 26 laboratories from 19 States Parties took part in an exercise on the analysis of the biotoxin ricin and another biotoxin exercise is in the planning stage. The Second Biomedical Proficiency Test has been completed, with 25 laboratories from 20 States Parties participating.

The Forty-First Environmental Proficiency Test is under way, with 13 laboratories from 12 States Parties participating.

53. This network of laboratories is critical to our mission. To date, nine of our partner laboratories have analysed samples in support of our various missions. Nearly 250 analyses have been conducted, which have been documented in well over 2,000 pages of analytical reports. On the other hand, there are nine laboratories from seven States Parties that have not yet entered into a technical agreement for the off-site analysis of samples; I encourage these States Parties to assist their laboratories in completing an agreement.

#### Article VI inspections

54. In accordance with the Programme and Budget for 2017, the number of Article VI inspections planned this year is 241. Of these, 11 are planned at Schedule 1 facilities, 42 at Schedule 2 plant sites, 19 at Schedule 3 plant sites, and 169 at other chemical production facilities (OCPFs).
55. As at 30 June, 139 Article VI inspections had been carried out. This figure includes six inspections at Schedule 1 facilities, 20 at Schedule 2 plant sites, 12 at Schedule 3 plant sites, and 101 at OCPF plant sites. This represents 58% of the 241 inspections provided for in the Programme and Budget for 2017.
56. To date in 2017, five Article VI inspections with S&A have been completed. This number includes four inspections at Schedule 2 plant sites and one at an OCPF plant site. The total number of Article VI inspections in which the S&A methodology has been used has reached 99 to date.
57. For S&A, the use of GC-MS<sup>2</sup> analytical methods and equipment has been supplemented by the use of the First Defender equipment (the so-called Raman method). This was selected as a potential method for field testing for routine use to identify scheduled chemicals. In addition, the First Defender has been used independently in three Schedule 1 inspections this year. We look to use the First Defender as an independent tool in more such appropriate situations in the future.
58. Consultations conducted in the Industry Cluster meeting held this week addressed the recommendations of the SAB and topics relevant for Article VI verification activities. The Technical Secretariat continues to evaluate the risk to the object and purpose of the Convention of biologically mediated production processes. An initial report on the geographical impact on declarations has been presented and more details will be provided at the October meeting of the Industry Cluster, as the results from the survey on biomediated processes are fully compiled. The due date for this survey has been extended to 15 August, to allow for additional State Party input. The current inspection guidelines regarding bio-mediated processes were also presented, to highlight the need for a unified way forward regarding this SAB recommendation.

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<sup>2</sup> GC-MS = gas chromatography-mass spectrometry.

Inspectorate training

59. Since the last session of the Council, a group of 27 new inspectors (Group P) have completed their probationary period and have become part of the OPCW inspection teams.
60. During the reporting period, the Capacity-Building and Contingency-Planning Cell of the Inspectorate Division provided 14 individual training courses, comprising 590 inspector days and 171 instructor days, to a total of 154 participants.
61. The Secretariat continues to train inspectors to operate in high-risk environments by providing the Secure and Safe Approaches in Filed Environments (SSAFE) training courses.
62. A SSAFE training course was conducted at the United Nations Training Centre in Hammelburg, Germany in March.
63. As at 30 June, 45 inspectors had received the SSAFE certification. In addition, two members of the Capacity-Building and Contingency-Planning Cell had completed the SSAFE instructor course, which enhances the Secretariat's current capability to organise its own SSAFE training.
64. The annual toxic chemical training refresher course was conducted in June, with the support of the National Authority of Slovakia.
65. In March, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland provided a training course on investigation techniques and forensics basics for inspectors as an in-kind contribution. The course was followed by an additional forensics training course provided by the Netherlands Forensic Institute in June.
66. Since the last session of the Council, two sessions of refresher training courses for inspectors have been conducted. These courses provided updates on the latest verification policies and OPCW safety and confidentiality regulations.
67. The United States of America has continued to provide the Hazardous Waste Operations Emergency Response (HAZWOPER) refresher courses.

Safety and Analytical Chemistry Cell

68. The Inspectorate Division, through its Safety and Analytical Chemistry Cell, has developed and delivered a number of specialised scientific and technical training courses. These courses enable inspectors to use a methodology to resolve ambiguities during sampling and analysis inspections, minimising dependence on commercial or other databases and furthering the protection of commercially sensitive information.
69. Application of the methodology for S&A missions this year has already borne promising results. A course on Schedule 1 chemistry, which aims to develop a consistent and robust approach to verifying the absence of Schedule 1 chemicals, has received very positive feedback.

70. 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. The way the Secretariat conducts S&A inspections will be reviewed by the Inspectorate and Verification Divisions over the course of the year, with recommendations to follow in due course.

#### Scientific Advisory Board

71. Since the last session of the Council, the SAB's advice on riot control agents has been circulated as SAB-25/WP.1 (dated 27 March 2017). This report serves as a detailed technical reference to accompany advice previously issued by the Secretariat in 2014 (S/1177/2014, dated 1 May 2014). It is intended to aid States Parties in identifying chemicals that have been shown to meet the definition of a riot control agent in accordance with paragraph 7 of Article II of the Convention.
72. The SAB will hold one additional workshop this year to inform its report on developments in science and technology for the Fourth Review Conference. A workshop on trends in chemical production is to be co-organised with the Institute for Medical Research and Occupational Health in Zagreb, Croatia, in October.
73. The deadline for submission of nominations for open positions on the SAB remains 31 July. I encourage States Parties to consider the Secretariat's call for nominations and for voluntary contributions to support the work of the SAB (S/1450/2017, dated 16 January 2017).

#### Engagement with the chemical industry

74. The Chemical Industry Coordination Group (CICG) met on 29 June in The Hague to discuss the progress in common projects and initiatives, as well as forthcoming activities. These include the organisation of meetings to be held before the end of the year, involving both National Authorities and chemical industry representatives, with the participation of chemical industry representatives in chemical security and education and outreach-related initiatives.
75. Since the last session of the Council, the Secretariat has also continued to discuss the issue of transfer discrepancies with representatives of the International Council of Chemical Associations.

#### Education and outreach

76. The Advisory Board on Education and Outreach (ABEO) held its third meeting from 14 to 16 March and briefed States Parties during a lunchtime event on 16 March. The Board's report has been published and is available to delegations (ABEO-3/1, dated 16 March 2017). A substantive and focused report on ABEO activities will be produced by the end of the year.

### **International cooperation and assistance**

77. Since the last session of the Council, the Secretariat has delivered 38 courses, seminars, and workshops to support the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.
78. The activities were conducted in accordance with the 2017 work plan and covered three main areas: national implementation, assistance and protection, and the peaceful uses of chemistry.

### Implementation support

79. The Technical Secretariat has continued its efforts to enhance the national capacities of States Parties for effective implementation of the Convention.
80. During the reporting period, regional meetings of National Authorities in Eastern Europe, Asia, and the GRULAC<sup>3</sup> were held in Georgia, the United Arab Emirates, and Jamaica, respectively. The meetings were preceded by panel discussions on the OPCW's achievements and challenges in line with the twentieth anniversary commemoration of the entry into force of the Convention.
81. An international conference on chemical disarmament and security entitled "The OPCW's Contributions to Global Peace and Security" was held in Qatar on 10 and 11 April. The conference provided an opportunity to reflect on shared progress in the elimination of chemical weapons, and on future challenges in pursuit of a world free of chemical weapons.
82. To enhance the knowledge and understanding of National Authority personnel, a basic training course on the Convention was organised at OPCW Headquarters from 3 to 7 April. This annual training course has been tailored to address knowledge management and continuity, as National Authorities experience high staff turnover.
83. The Secretariat provided technical support to a national legal workshop in Georgia held on 1 and 2 May, with the aim of reviewing existing national legislation and addressing key initial measures.
84. Building on the success of the training-of-trainers course for representatives of customs training institutions piloted last year, the second edition of this course was held at the OPCW Headquarters from 20 to 23 June, in cooperation with the WCO. The participants developed follow-up plans outlining steps to be taken for the incorporation of modules on the Convention in the curricula of their respective training institutions.
85. Representatives of the National Authority of Nigeria visited their British counterparts from 19 to 23 June as a part of the Mentorship/Partnership Programme study visit. The activities of the visit included briefings on the organisation and functioning of the National Authority of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, an overview of its national

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<sup>3</sup> GRULAC = Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

implementing legislation, a discussion of declaration- and inspection-related issues and good practices, and field visits. The return visit to Nigeria is planned to take place later in 2017.

#### Assistance and protection

86. During the intersessional period, the Secretariat held an S&A training course in Poland, and a pilot course in Spain on pre-hospital treatment and care for victims in the immediate aftermath of an incident.
87. The assistance and protection component supporting the fourth phase of the Africa Programme has commenced. The Secretariat's support of the development of national programmes for protective purposes continued in the East African Community (EAC) with a workshop in Burkina Faso, building on previous experience in protection planning in Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, and Uganda.
88. Building on the success in the EAC and the Economic Community of Western African States, a similar project for members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) was launched with a planning and coordination meeting in Zambia from 8 to 12 May. The SADC Member States took important steps and set milestones for the development of national protection programmes as outlined in Article X of the Convention.
89. The Secretariat held a training-of-trainers course on chemical response in the Czech Republic. Furthermore, the instructor exchange and development programme continued in all areas of the assistance and protection programme.
90. The Secretariat has continued to provide training opportunities for emergency management personnel, ensuring that the specific requirements of handling a chemical attack are considered and built into emergency response planning. To this end, a table-top exercise was held in Indonesia for relevant representatives from the Asian region.

#### International cooperation

91. I am pleased to note that the 18th edition of the Associate Programme, which this year will accommodate 32 participants from 32 Member States, will commence on 28 July.
92. During the reporting period, the Secretariat continued its efforts to enhance analytical and laboratory skills for developing States Parties and those with economies in transition.
93. An analytical skills development course for African Member States and a laboratory skills enhancement programme on nuclear magnetic resonance were held at the Finnish Institute for Verification of the Chemical Weapons Convention (VERIFIN) in Helsinki, Finland, in March and May respectively.
94. The OPCW and Protechnik Laboratories co-organised an analytical chemistry course for African Member States in Pretoria, South Africa, in May.

95. The seventh course on the analysis of chemicals related to the Chemical Weapons Convention in the framework of OPCW proficiency testing was held in Madrid, Spain, in June.
96. With the support of the Government of Germany, the OPCW and the University of Wuppertal jointly organised two parallel training courses on “Loss Prevention and Safety Promotion in the Chemical Process Industries” for Member States from Africa, Asia, and the GRULAC, from 3 to 7 April.
97. Two chemical safety and security programmes for African Member States took place in Kampala, Uganda, and in Algiers, Algeria, in March and May respectively.
98. The second edition of the course on chemical safety and security management in laboratories for Member States in the GRULAC region was organised in Buenos Aires in April.
99. I am pleased that the Secretariat organised the OPCW’s second symposium on women in chemistry on 2 May at the OPCW Headquarters, followed by a three-day basic analytical chemistry course for women chemists at the OPCW Laboratory.
100. Since the last session of the Executive Council, the Technical Secretariat has continued its activities towards promoting exchange of knowledge. Sixteen directly funded projects are ongoing and preparations for another five to start in 2017 are under way. Three fellowships have already begun and eight more will begin later this year.
101. Under the Conference-Support Programme, a total of six participants have been sponsored to attend two conferences.

### **External relations**

102. Since the last session of the Council, we have welcomed nine new Permanent Representatives to the OPCW, who presented their letters of credentials, from India, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, the Republic of Korea, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, and Turkmenistan.
103. I received a number of high-level officials at the OPCW Headquarters, namely H.E. Mr Mauricio Macri, President of Argentina, H.E. Mrs Retno Marsudi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, H.E. Mr Liu Lihua, Deputy Minister of Industry and Information Technology of China, and H.E. Mr Michael Starbæk Christensen, Permanent Under-Secretary of State of Denmark.
104. I delivered a keynote address at the eighth Singapore International Symposium on Protection against Toxic Substances in March. I delivered a statement to mark the twentieth anniversary of the OPCW at the First Scientific International Conference on CBRNe<sup>4</sup> in Rome, Italy, in May, and met with H.E. Mr Benedetto Della Vedova, Under-Secretary of State, at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. Also in May, I participated in the twentieth International Chemical

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<sup>4</sup> CBRNe = Chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive.

Weapons Demilitarisation Conference held in London, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. In Finland, I met with the President of Finland, H.E. Mr Sauli Niinistö and Foreign Minister, H.E. Mr Timo Soini, and delivered a keynote address at the 13th Annual NATO Conference on Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation. In June, I participated in the Executive Council visit to China and delivered a lecture at Peking University. While in Beijing, I met with State Councillor, Mr Yang Jiechi and the Minister of Industry and Information Technology, Mr Miao Wei. Later in June, I delivered a keynote address at an event hosted by the United States Department of State marking the twentieth anniversary of the Chemical Weapons Convention and met with senior United States officials, including the National Security Advisor, Mr Herbert Raymond McMaster; the Deputy Secretary of State, Mr John Sullivan; and Acting Assistant Secretary of State, Ms Anita E. Friedt. I participated in a panel discussion on ethics in science at the 67th Lindau Nobel Laureate Meeting in Germany. In July, during my visit to Tehran, the Islamic Republic of Iran, I met with H.E. Mohammad Javad Zarif, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and delivered statements at the Ministry of Defence and the Institute for Political and International Studies at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

105. The Deputy Director-General delivered the keynote address at a Ceremonial Meeting of the Croatian National Authority held in Zagreb, Croatia, on 31 May. During his visit to Zagreb, the Deputy Director-General also met with a number of Croatian officials, including the Assistant Minister for Multilateral and Global Affairs, Mr Amir Muharemi, of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, and Director-General of the Ruđer Bošković Institute, Professor Tome Antičić.
106. The Deputy Director-General also visited Doha, Qatar, from 9 to 11 April, where he delivered a keynote address at the International Conference on Chemical Disarmament and Security, entitled “The OPCW’s Contributions to Global Peace and Security”. During his visit, the Deputy Director-General held bilateral meetings with Qatari officials, including the Minister of Energy and Industry, H.E. Dr Mohammed Bin Saleh Al-Sada; Chief of Staff of the Qatari Armed Forces, H.E. Major General (Pilot) Ghanem bin Shaheen Al Ghanem; and Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Dr Ahmad Hassan Al-Hamadi.
107. A webcast of the twentieth anniversary ceremony held on 26 April in the Hall of Knights in The Hague reached over 1,350 viewers in 70 different countries, either live or on-demand after the event. The full video of the commemoration ceremony can be found on the OPCW website. The event featured a compelling OPCW-produced short video, “20 Years in Our Lives”, conveying the Organisation’s achievements. The video has been shown at many events around the world to mark the twentieth anniversary and has received over 1,500 views in over 90 countries. A campaign related to the anniversary entitled “20 Moments” has succeeded in reaching over 205,000 people across the OPCW’s social media channels. This kind of campaign has proven to be an effective way to engage with stakeholders around the world. Furthermore, thanks to the collaboration of the Municipality of The Hague, 150 OPCW anniversary flags promoting key messages adorned The Hague, reminding all citizens of this landmark moment and raising the profile of the OPCW.

108. To support twentieth anniversary-related events during the course of the year, the Technical Secretariat launched a dedicated website at [20years.opcw.org](http://20years.opcw.org). The website tells the story of the OPCW and features a list of events (past and future), as well as resources, including videos, images, a social media toolkit, and educational posters. As an indication of the interest in the OPCW, the Convention, and our work 20 years on, as at mid-June, the dedicated website had received over 6,700 visitors since its launch. It continues to be a resource for States Parties to promote their events and I encourage all States Parties to use it for their own anniversary events.
109. Work continues on the overhaul of the official OPCW website, with a soft launch of the website anticipated for early 2018.
110. As part of the efforts to raise the profile of the OPCW and highlight its work, the Technical Secretariat participated in the Doors Open Day of the European External Action Service of the European Union (EU) on 7 May in Brussels, Belgium. This resulted in the exposure of approximately 6,000 people to the importance of the OPCW's mission, with particular attention paid to the OPCW activities supported by the EU. The OPCW is honoured to be the first non-EU institution to be invited to this event.
111. Applications are now open for the eighth edition of the T.M.C. Asser Institute's annual Summer Programme on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction in a Changing World, which will take place from 4 to 8 September. I appeal to you to encourage diplomats, National Authority representatives, industry practitioners, and other early- to mid-career professionals to participate in this worthwhile training programme.

#### **Administrative and financial matters**

112. As at 30 June 2017, the collection level for 2017 assessed contributions was 77.7%, compared to 73.9% on the same date last year. I urge States Parties that have not yet paid their outstanding contributions to do so at the earliest and in full.
113. In accordance with the extension of the Tenancy Agreement for the OPCW Headquarters Building through 2028, to date, landlord contributions at a total value of EUR 900,000 have been received and credited to the Working Capital Fund. In line with the agreed modified schedule of payment (S/1493/2017, dated 4 May 2017), two further payments of EUR 250,000 each are expected, the first no later than 31 January 2018 and the second no later than 31 January 2019, for a total of EUR 1.4 million.
114. Following the completion of the three-year term (2015 to 2017 inclusive) of the National Audit Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, I have issued a request for nominations for the External Auditor of the OPCW, with effect from the 2018 financial period (S/1507/2017, dated 22 June 2017). States Parties are invited to nominate candidates whom they wish the Conference at its Twenty-Second Session to consider for appointment.
115. In June, the ABAF met for its Forty-Second Session, and considered a number of financial and administrative matters (ABAF-42/1, dated 9 June 2017). I welcome the

continuing advice and support provided by the ABAF and note that the Secretariat's response to the ABAF's report has been issued (EC-85/DG.24, dated 4 July 2017).

116. Pursuant to the adoption by all United Nations common system organisations of a new compensation package for the professional and higher categories of personnel, the Technical Secretariat has made a presentation on the package to the ABAF. The Technical Secretariat is currently monitoring the implementation of this reform within the United Nations and will present its proposal for implementation to the ABAF at its next session.
117. The Organisation has signed a contract for the implementation and support of the core solution for the enterprise resource planning (ERP) project. The implementation of the core solution has started and is planned to go live in January 2018.
118. The final component of the ERP solution is in the process of being procured, with the selection to be finalised in the third quarter of this year and implementation to start immediately thereafter.
119. Mr Chairperson, this concludes my statement. Thank you for your attention.

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