



Eighty-Sixth Session  
10 – 13 October 2017

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**NOTE BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL****REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ADVISORY BOARD  
ON EDUCATION AND OUTREACH IN 2017**

1. Paragraph 18 of the Terms of Reference of the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach (ABEO), as adopted by the Conference of the States Parties (hereinafter “the Conference”) at its Twentieth Session (Annex to C-20/DEC.9, dated 3 December 2015), provides for the submission by the Director-General of an annual report to the Executive Council (hereinafter “the Council”) and to the Conference on the ABEO’s activities. This is the second such report, covering the activities of the ABEO from January to September 2017, including its Third and Fourth Sessions. The reports of those sessions (ABEO-3/1, dated 16 March 2017 and ABEO-4/1, dated 31 August 2017) serve as the basis for this report.
2. In accordance with its terms of reference, at its Third Session the Board confirmed Dr Jean Pascal Zanders of Belgium as its Chairperson and Dr Edith Valles of Argentina as its Vice-Chairperson.
3. In the first nine months of 2017, the Board concentrated on preparation of a written report to a specific request put to it (see the Annex to this report), and on supporting regional meetings of National Authorities organised by the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter “the Secretariat”).

**Third Session of the Board**

4. The ABEO’s Third Session took place over three days, from 14 to 16 March 2017. The Secretariat assisted the Board in devising a draft agenda that allowed for the discussion of intersessional activities of ABEO members and recommendations the Board had previously made, as well as the mapping of a process to respond to a request for a written report by the end of 2017, addressing three interrelated issues.
5. In opening the Third Session, the Director-General noted that the Organisation had entered a period of transition, in which its focus would increasingly shift from the verified elimination of declared chemical weapons stockpiles to preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons. In this context it would be important for the Organisation to enhance its education and outreach activities, with a view to reaching a broader, more diverse group of stakeholders. The Director-General also requested the Board to focus its efforts on a set of interrelated questions (see Annex) and to produce, by the end of 2017, a substantive report on these issues.



6. At its Third Session, the ABEO received an update on the most important developments in the work of the Organisation since the Board's previous meeting in October 2016, addressing, inter alia, chemical weapons destruction progress, the work of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism, and the work undertaken by the Open-Ended Working Group on the Future Priorities of the OPCW (OEWG-FP).
7. Also at its Third Session, the ABEO received feedback from the Secretariat on recommendations the Board had previously issued; discussed reports on intersessional activities of its members; engaged with external speakers, who were invited to deliver presentations on the work of the Scientific Advisory Board and a new suite of disarmament and non-proliferation e-learning modules produced by the EU Non-Proliferation Consortium; and deliberated on the approach to take in relation to the Director-General's request for submission by the Board of a substantive education and outreach report by the end of 2017.

#### **Intersessional activities**

8. During the intersessional period, the ABEO formed a drafting group to begin work on the report requested by the Director-General.
9. Also during the intersessional period, the Secretariat started developing a strategic plan for education and outreach and sought the ABEO's inputs. The Director-General requested that those inputs be included in the report to him, to be produced by the end of 2017.
10. In May and June 2017, several Board members were invited by the Secretariat to attend the regional meetings of National Authorities and participate in the high-level panel discussions to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the OPCW. The meetings took place in Tbilisi, Georgia (3 to 5 May); Dubai, the United Arab Emirates (16 to 18 May); Montego Bay, Jamaica (13 to 15 June); and Banjul, the Gambia (18 to 20 July).
11. In addition, the ABEO Vice-Chairperson gave presentations on education and outreach to the Symposium on Women in Chemistry at OPCW Headquarters on 2 May and to the OEWG-FP on 19 June.

#### **Fourth Session of the Board**

12. The ABEO's Fourth Session took place from 29 to 31 August 2017 and focussed mainly on the report requested by the Director-General earlier in the year.
13. The Director-General opened the Board's Fourth Session, emphasising that international attention on the Organisation was set to grow, and that this would both pose challenges and present opportunities for the Organisation's education and outreach activities. The Director-General noted the need to ensure that the media and members of the public understand the role and mandate of the Organisation to secure continued international cooperation and support for the ban on chemical weapons.
14. At its Fourth Session, the Board received the by now customary briefing by the Secretariat on notable developments at the OPCW of relevance to the ABEO's

mandate, discussed the status of ABEO recommendations, and received updates from Board members on their intersessional activities.

15. The ABEO devoted the majority of its Fourth Session to discussion of the draft report language produced by the drafting group. This benefitted from additional input from an external expert in active learning approaches and a facilitated session on specific aspects of the report requested.

### **Conclusions**

16. Since submission of the report on the ABEO's first year of operation (EC-84/DG.7 C-22/DG.1, dated 5 January 2017), the Board has undergone a transition from a focus "on bedding down its practices and procedures and coming to common understandings on the scope of its work" to a more targeted approach, partially necessitated by the request to submit a substantial report by the end of 2017. At the same time, individual Board members have continued to contribute to Secretariat activities as outlined above. The Director-General thanks all ABEO members for their commitment to the Board and for their work during the Board's second year of operation.
17. The ABEO will meet again in February and August 2018 for its Fifth and Sixth Sessions. During the current intersessional period, the Board's initial priority will be on finalising the requested report by the end of 2017. The Director-General looks forward to seeing the results of that work, which will not only be based on best practices, as well as the latest advances in education and outreach theory or practice, but should also be practically focused and results oriented.

Annex: Director-General's Request to the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach to Provide Advice on the Incorporation of Education and Outreach (E&O) Theory or Practice into E&O Activities of the OPCW, as the Organisation Transitions to a Focus on Preventing the Re-emergence of Chemical Weapons

**Annex**

**DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S REQUEST TO THE ADVISORY BOARD ON  
EDUCATION AND OUTREACH TO PROVIDE ADVICE ON THE  
INCORPORATION OF EDUCATION AND OUTREACH (E&O) THEORY OR  
PRACTICE INTO E&O ACTIVITIES OF THE OPCW, AS THE ORGANISATION  
TRANSITIONS TO A FOCUS ON PREVENTING THE RE-EMERGENCE OF  
CHEMICAL WEAPONS**

1. As the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) shifts its focus, in the short to medium term, from chemical disarmament to preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons, the role of education and outreach (E&O) in implementing the Convention takes on greater importance (EC-79/DG.11, dated 29 May 2015). A holistic approach to preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons could affect verification activities, capacity development, engagement with a broad range of stakeholders, as well as the governance of the Organisation (S/1252/2015, dated 6 March 2015).
2. The mandate of the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach (ABEO) has at its core the provision to ensure that the Organisation's E&O activities, and those of States Parties, are effective, sustainable, cost-effective, and benefit from the latest advances in education and outreach theory or practice (C-20/DEC.9, dated 3 December 2015).
3. The Director-General therefore requests the ABEO to address the following questions in a written report to be submitted to him by the end of 2017:
  - (a) Given the mandate of the ABEO (as mentioned in paragraph 2), what are current best practices as well as the latest advances in education and outreach theory or practice that are of relevance to the E&O activities of the OPCW?
  - (b) How could the practices and advances identified in the ABEO's answer to question (a) be best utilised to enhance the Organisation's E&O activities in support of the different aspects of preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons identified in paragraph 1 above?
  - (c) Based on the answer to question (b), which concrete action (both conduct of activities and development of educational tools) should the Organisation, States Parties, as well as the ABEO and its members pursue as a matter of priority from 2018 onward, so as to enhance both the scope and the reach of the OPCW's E&O activities?