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

Mr Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

1. I welcome you to the Eighty-Sixth Session of the Executive Council.
2. Allow me to begin by recognising the Chairperson, Ambassador Sheikh Mohammed Belal, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh, for his able leadership and extensive efforts to facilitate consensus in the Council. I should also acknowledge the Vice-Chairpersons for their activities under their respective clusters of issues.
3. Since the last session of the Council, our activities across all pillars of the Convention have been ongoing and we have advanced in a number of areas.
4. Progress on the destruction of the remaining chemical weapons stockpiles continues, and as at 30 September 96.3% of declared Category 1 chemical weapons have been destroyed.
5. On 27 September, the National Authority of the Russian Federation announced that it had completely eliminated its chemical weapon stocks—almost 40,000 metric tonnes (MT). The Deputy Director-General participated in the ceremony marking the completion of demilitarisation operations, which took place at the Kizner facility.
6. I take this opportunity to congratulate the Russian Federation for this remarkable achievement and commend all those who were involved for their professionalism and dedication. This is a true milestone in the implementation of the goals of the Chemical Weapons Convention. I also wish to thank all States Parties that supported the Russian Federation's chemical demilitarisation programme over the years.
7. In the United States of America, the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (PCAPP) has been making steady progress. Moreover, the construction and systemisation activities are moving forward at the Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (BGCAPP) and the BGCAPP Static Detonation Chamber (SDC). While the BGCAPP main plant is scheduled to begin destruction operations in April 2020 and continue until 2023, the schedule for the BGCAPP-SDC is currently under review. As at 30 September 2017, the United States of America had destroyed 25,154 MT, or 90.6%, of its declared Category 1 chemical weapons.



8. On Syria-related issues, from 16 to 18 September 2017, I held another round of high-level consultations with a delegation led by Vice Foreign Minister Dr Faisal Mekdad at the OPCW Headquarters. The purpose of these consultations was to clarify all outstanding issues regarding the initial declaration and related submissions of the Syrian Arab Republic. Further details on the outcome of the consultations have been shared with you through my report (EC-86/DG.30, dated 4 October 2017) and the report on the work of the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) (EC-86/HP/DG.2, dated 3 October 2017). A presentation by the Head of the DAT was also made on 3 October.
9. The same day, I briefed the States Parties on the results of the analyses regarding the reported incident in Ltamenah, Hama Governorate, in Syria in March 2017, which showed the presence of sarin and sarin-related substances. The Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) will continue its work on this incident as well as on other allegations that have been assessed as credible. I reiterate my call for States Parties to share any information they may have on these allegations.
10. The Syrian Arab Republic has informed the Secretariat that the two remaining chemical weapons production facilities, which were previously inaccessible due to the security situation, can now be visited and could be destroyed. The Syrian Arab Republic has requested assistance to undertake the destruction of these two sites. An information Note on this has been circulated (S/1541/2017, dated 9 October 2017). The Secretariat has started the preparatory work to carry out the initial inspection of them. Meanwhile, the Secretariat is also making arrangements for the extension of the UNOPS contract into next year.
11. Pursuant to Executive Council decision EC-83/DEC.5 (dated 11 November 2016), the Secretariat is making plans for the second round of inspections at the Syrian Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC).
12. With regard to Libya's chemical weapons, work remains on track. The destruction of Category 2 chemical weapons is progressing and is expected to be completed before the end of the year. OPCW inspection teams are verifying the destruction process at GEKA mbH¹.
13. The contents of the remaining tank at the Ruwagha Tank Farm that experienced an exothermic reaction during reloading have been destroyed. The Secretariat was able to verify the destruction remotely.
14. I received a letter from the Libyan Minister of Foreign Affairs on 29 August 2017, inviting an inspection team to visit Ruwagha to obtain soil samples, as requested by the Council in the report of the Eighty-Third Session. The Secretariat is planning to undertake this mission to Libya in consultation with the United Nations Department of Safety and Security and the Libyan authorities.
15. In Iraq, the encapsulation of Bunker 13 has been completed, while approximately 25% of the work for Bunker 41 has been achieved. During a recent technical assistance visit to Iraq, the OPCW team was provided with a comprehensive update

¹ GEKA mbH = Gesellschaft zur Entsorgung von chemischen Kampfstoffen und Rüstungsaltslasten mbH.

on the progress at Al Muthana, as well as some verification material which is being analysed by experts.

16. Activities related to the chemical weapons abandoned by Japan on the territory of China are advancing. Over the intersessional period, the Secretariat conducted destruction, as well as excavation and recovery, inspections in China, including at Haerbaling. The Secretariat continues to work closely with Chinese and Japanese authorities, and a trilateral meeting in Beijing is planned for December 2017.
17. The recovery of old chemical weapons (OCW) continues in a number of States Parties. During the intersessional period, Panama informed the Secretariat that all of their eight declared OCWs have been destroyed. The Secretariat deployed an inspection team to Panama to observe the process. A final report is being prepared.
18. As at 30 September 2017, 200 Article VI inspections have been carried out. This represents 83% of the 241 inspections provided for in the Programme and Budget for 2017.
19. As you are aware, for the last three years the Technical Secretariat has been implementing the decision of the Conference in 2014, C-19/DEC.11 (dated 4 December 2014), on the re-hiring of inspectors. The Secretariat has filled up to 20% of inspector positions as authorised by this decision. I can confidently state that this practice has proven to be in the interest of the Organisation. I understand that a draft decision for the renewal of this authority is under consideration by States Parties.
20. The Secretariat continues its efforts to increase and expand the utilisation of the Secure Information Exchange system (SIX), taking into consideration the feedback from State Parties. I welcome the fact that 44 States Parties have already been using the system, and encourage others to consider doing it as well. I believe that the SIX has contributed to the efficiency of the verification mechanism.
21. The OPCW Laboratory has completed the Forty-First Proficiency Test, with 13 laboratories from 12 State Parties participating. The designated laboratory system now includes 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.
22. A consultancy company has been hired to prepare a preliminary report on the project for modernising the OPCW Laboratory and Equipment Store facilities. States Parties' support is crucial for this project, which will significantly enhance the scientific and analytical capabilities of the OPCW. By providing a state-of-the-art training facility, it will also help build new capabilities in our Member States. In this regard, I would like to announce that the Secretariat plans to create a trust fund to raise the required funds to enable the project to be realised.
23. On 2 October, during the meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Future Priorities of the OPCW (OEWG-FP), chaired by Ambassador Nölke of Canada and Ambassador Koloane of South Africa, the Secretariat provided presentations on 'OPCW governance, resources, and management', 'OPCW strategic financing', and 'Upgrading the OPCW Chemical Laboratory'. I understand the Co-Chairpersons will submit their report in November.

24. For the preparation of the Fourth Review Conference, which will be held in December 2018, States Parties will need to take a decision on an open-ended working group for the drafting of the outcome document. Given the timelines, action should be taken at the forthcoming session of the Conference.
25. The 5 September meeting of the Sub-Working Group on Non-State Actors, which was facilitated by Ambassador Diop, was briefed by Mr Larry Gbevlo, the Director of the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism in Algiers. The focus of the meeting was the Organisation's support for African States Parties in countering chemical terrorism.
26. From 28 to 29 September the OPCW hosted an experts workshop on international chemical security coordination sponsored by the Government of New Zealand. Experts from relevant international organisations, industry, academia, and civil society made valuable contributions to the discussions. The outcome of the workshop was shared with States Parties during yesterday's meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism (OEWG-T).
27. The OEWG-T also discussed the contribution of the OEWG-T to the OEWG-FP, prepared jointly by Ambassador Diop and Ambassador Infante. During the past two and half years there have been 36 speakers from other relevant organisations and States Parties who addressed the OEWG-T and its sub-working group. Discussion papers were prepared by the Technical Secretariat. I believe that we have now collected a significant amount of input that could enable us to have more focused discussions on specific aspects of chemical terrorism. I have noted that there was a particular interest on the subject matter on the part of West African countries, representatives of which I met during my visit to Cameroon.
28. In the field of international cooperation and assistance, the Secretariat issued the annual report on the status of implementation of Article VII (EC-86/DG.10 C-22/DG.10, dated 24 August 2017). The report is based on the inputs received from 118 States Parties on the status of their implementation of Article VII, and includes an update on the progress in the adoption of national implementing legislation.
29. In addition, the Secretariat also issued its annual reports on the status of implementation of Article X (EC-86/DG.13, dated 30 August 2017) and Article XI (EC-86/DG.19 C-22/DG.15, dated 14 September 2017). The Executive Council has also received my biennial report on the status of implementation of the International Support Network for Victims of Chemical Weapons (EC-86/DG.15, dated 6 September 2017).
30. The 2017 edition of the Associate Programme, with 32 participants, has been successfully completed. Since its inception, the Associate Programme has trained 456 experts from 121 Member States. The programme alumni provide strong support for the national implementation of the Convention in their home countries, and contribute effectively to raising awareness, promoting education and outreach related to eliminating chemical weapons, and ensuring the use of chemistry exclusively for peaceful purposes. I would like to express my appreciation for the continued support provided to the programme by various partners, including international organisations, States Parties, and the chemical industry.

31. Based on a decision adopted at the Twenty-First Session of the Conference of the States Parties, and as proposed during the informal consultations on Article XI during the reporting period, the Secretariat will organise a review and evaluation workshop on the components of an agreed framework for the full implementation of Article XI” (C-16/DEC.10, dated 1 December 2011) at the OPCW Headquarters on 21 November 2017. The purpose of the workshop is to facilitate deliberations among States Parties with a view to further enhancing the implementation of Article XI.
32. To further enhance national implementation of the Convention, the Secretariat has been organising regional events. In September, I opened two regional stakeholder forums in Cameroon and Chile on implementing legislation. In these forums, target States in each region were brought together to discuss the practical steps towards developing and adopting comprehensive legislation covering all initial measures.
33. With regard to the Annual Meeting of the National Authorities this year, the Secretariat for the first time has invited chemical industry representatives to attend this meeting, which will be held from 22 to 24 November. In addition to international associations, national representatives of chemical industry are also invited.
34. On 6 September, I addressed the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva at the invitation of the President of the Conference, the Permanent Representative of Spain, to mark the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention and the establishment of the OPCW. During the visit, I also met with the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, Mr Michael Møller. Upon his invitation, the OPCW participated in the UN Open Day held at the Palais des Nations in Geneva on 7 October 2017.
35. I take this opportunity to welcome seven new members to the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) while expressing my sincere appreciation to members whose terms end this year. The Twenty-Sixth Session of the SAB will be held from 16 to 20 October 2017, and will focus on the preparation for the Board’s report on developments in science and technology to be submitted to the Fourth Review Conference.
36. The Advisory Board on Education and Outreach held its fourth meeting from 29 to 31 August 2017. The report of the Board’s meeting has been circulated to the States Parties. I look forward to receiving the ABEO’s report later this year, which will provide advice on the incorporation of education and outreach theory into the relevant activities of the OPCW.
37. The 2016 Financial Statements were audited and certified by the External Auditor of the OPCW and 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. 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 at this session.
38. The 2018 Programme and Budget has been formulated on a zero nominal growth basis, and amounts to EUR 67,248,655. This represents a 0.8% or EUR 549,545

reduction against the 2017 Programme and Budget. In addition, the number of fixed-term staff positions will be cut from 459 to 456.

39. I have issued a Note (EC-86/DG.25, dated 28 September 2017) proposing the establishment of a special fund to cover the costs of the Fourth Review Conference in 2018, with a corresponding draft decision (EC-86/DEC/CRP.5, dated 28 September 2017). A separate draft decision (EC-86/DEC/CRP.8, dated 2 October 2017) recommends the transfer of a portion of the 2015 cash surplus to this fund.
40. In another Note (EC-86/DG.27, dated 2 October 2017) I have informed States Parties that the financial resources available to the Special Fund for Special Missions have been fully disbursed or obligated and that the balance of the fund is now nil. A draft decision to extend the fund is also before the Council (EC-86/DEC/CRP.7, dated 2 October 2017).
41. In August, the Advisory Board on Administrative and Financial Matters (ABAF) met for its Forty-Third Session, and considered a number of financial and administrative matters (ABAF-43/1, dated 1 September 2017). I welcome the ongoing advice and support provided by the ABAF and note that the Secretariat's response to its report has been issued (EC-86/DG.24, dated 27 September 2017).
42. The Secretariat has prepared and submitted for the consideration of the Council draft decisions concerning amendments to the OPCW Staff Regulations and Interim Staff Rules (S/1553/2017, dated 14 September 2017) and the OPCW Financial Regulations and Rules (S/1535/2017, dated 15 September 2017). These amendments serve to implement the revised compensation package of the United Nations Common System for the Professional and higher categories and to facilitate the implementation of the new enterprise resource planning (ERP) system at the Secretariat.
43. 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, a request for nominations for the External Auditor of the OPCW was issued (S/1507/2017, dated 22 June 2017). The Secretariat received the re-nomination for the appointment of the External Auditor and this has been circulated to States Parties for consideration.
44. As the end of 2017 draws closer, the OPCW continues to commemorate its twentieth anniversary through events and initiatives. To date, 30 events have been hosted by States Parties and other partners from all regional groups. A further five events are planned for the remainder of the year. These events have successfully raised awareness among States Parties and other stakeholders about the work of the OPCW and the goals of the Convention. I thank all those who organised or participated in such events.
45. On 24 September, the OPCW participated in the annual International Open Day, organised by the City of The Hague. This year we welcomed over 900 visitors to the OPCW Headquarters, which was a 50% increase from last year. Our social media campaign also reached 138,000 people, which is nearly a 100% increase over the previous year.

46. The deadline for submitting proposals for the fourth annual OPCW-The Hague Award has been extended to 15 October. As noted before, this year's award will be based on updated rules and procedures. The Selection Committee will in due course assess the nominations with a view to bestowing the award on the selected candidate(s) during the Twenty-Second Session of the Conference.
47. Mr Chairperson, my report to the Council at its Eighty-Sixth 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

48. As at 30 September 2017, the Secretariat had verified the destruction by possessor States Parties of 67,867 MT, or 96.3% of all declared Category 1 chemical weapons.

Russian Federation

49. On 27 September 2017, the Secretariat verified the destruction of the Russian Federation's entire declared stockpile.
50. The Kizner facility completed the destruction of over 5,745 MT of chemical agents, including sarin, soman, VX, and lewisite. This facility also destroyed more than 2,187,000 munitions of various calibres.

United States of America

51. The PCAPP facility has so far destroyed 229.51 MT of mustard agent. Parallel to the destruction operations of mustard agent-filled M104 and M110 155-mm projectiles, the facility has reconfigured mustard agent-filled M60 105-mm boxed munitions. The energetic components removed from these three types of munitions have been regularly shipped to and destroyed at the PCAPP's non-contiguous SDC, located in Anniston, Alabama. The hydrolysates generated during the destruction operations were treated off-site and disposed at the PCAPP's non-contiguous Veolia treatment, storage, and disposal facility, located at Port Arthur, Texas.
52. The BGCAPP has completed 100% of construction work, and systemisation is currently at 68%. 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. Construction work and systemisation for the SDC stand now at 87% and 80% completion, respectively.

Libya

53. As at 30 September 2017, Libya had destroyed 100% or 26.345 MT of its Category 1 chemical weapons and approximately 89% or 1,051.96 MT of its Category 2 chemical weapons. Inspection teams have also verified the destruction of 238.66 MT of tributylamine, 18 MT of 2-chloroethanol, 24.81 MT of phosphorous trichloride, and 100.83 MT of thionyl chloride. GEKA mbH switched from incineration to neutralisation operations on 5 July 2017 and completed the destruction of thionyl chloride on 10 September.

54. Libya has notified the Secretariat that the European Union intends to provide funding to the Technical Secretariat for the destruction of the remaining decanted tanks and environmental clean-up at Ruwagha, Libya (EC-M-53/DEC.1, dated 26 August 2016).

Declarations

55. To date, only one State Party has not submitted its initial declaration. The Secretariat continues to provide assistance to this State Party to ensure it fulfils its declarations obligations under the Convention at the earliest date.
56. An update is still pending from some States Parties regarding Article III declarations of riot control agents. I take this opportunity to encourage these States Parties to revise their riot control agent declarations and to update them in accordance with the Convention.
57. The annual declarations of anticipated activities (ADAAs) 2018 for Schedule 1 facilities were due by 2 October. Twenty-one States Parties have submitted their ADAAs. The ADAAs 2018 for Schedule 2 and 3 plant sites are due by 1 November 2017.

Status of implementation of decision C-14/DEC.4

58. As at 13 September 2017, 42 States Parties have implemented the decision (C-14/DEC.4, dated 2 December 2009) on guidelines regarding concentration limits for mixtures containing Schedule 2A and Schedule 2A* chemicals. Currently 19 States Parties have yet to do so.
59. The Secretariat released its seventh survey on implementation of C-14/DEC.4 in September 2017 (S/1531/2017, dated 4 September 2017). I encourage all States Parties that have not previously informed the Secretariat of the status of implementation of the decision to complete this survey by the deadline of 31 December 2017.

Transfer discrepancies

60. In July 2017 the Secretariat issued a survey on national measures regarding the collection and declaration of import and export data for Schedule 2 and 3 chemicals (S/1511/2017, dated 5 July 2017) with the view to further analysing the ways to reconcile discrepancies in the declarations of import and export of Schedule 2 and 3 chemicals. To date, we have received 66 responses.
61. I encourage States Parties that have not yet submitted their responses to the Secretariat to do so at the earliest date.

Laboratories

62. To date, nine of our partner laboratories have analysed samples in support of our various missions. Over 300 analyses have been conducted and have been documented in well over 2,500 pages of analytical reports. There are also nine laboratories from seven States Parties that have not yet entered into a technical agreement for the off-site analysis of samples, which we encourage them to do.

Article VI inspections

63. 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 (OCPF).
64. So far in 2017, seven Article VI inspections with GC-MS² sampling and analysis have been completed. This number includes six inspections at Schedule 2 plant sites and one at an OCPF plant site. The total number of Article VI inspections in which the GC-MS sampling and analysis methodology has been used has reached 101.
65. The use of GC-MS analytical methods and equipment has been supplemented by the use of the FirstDefender equipment (the so-called Raman method). This was field tested for routine use to identify scheduled chemicals. In addition, the FirstDefender has been used independently during four Schedule 1 inspections this year.
66. Consultations under the Industry Cluster held this week addressed the recommendations of the Scientific Advisory Board and topics relevant for Article VI verification activities. The Secretariat presented the results from the survey on biomediated processes, in which 32 States Parties participated. With these survey results in hand, the Secretariat believes the data-gathering work is complete and that the Industry Cluster is now in a position to make a recommendation to the Executive Council. The Secretariat stands ready to support the efforts of States Parties to see this work completed in the near future.

Inspectorate training

67. Last week, a group of seven new inspectors (Group Q) commenced a ten-week mandatory programme of initial training.
68. Since the last session of the Council, the Capacity-Building and Contingency-Planning Cell of the Inspectorate Division provided 17 individual training courses. A total of 86 participants took part in the courses, comprising a total of 296 inspector days and 101 instructor days. Some of the instructors were directly involved in the Secretariat's capacity-building programmes for States Parties, such as the Associate Programme and the assistance and protection instructor's course.
69. In July, two of the OPCW toxic chemical training instructors from the Capacity-Building and Contingency-Planning Cell were deployed, with support of the Canadian Government, as participants in Exercise Precise Response 2017, which took place in Canada. The training provided an invaluable experience for the instructors to observe and participate in exercises related to chemical weapons detection, reconnaissance, and chemical sampling, followed by decontamination protocols.
70. From 18 to 19 July, the Secretariat conducted an in-house challenge inspection (CI) refresher training and table-top exercise. Twenty participants selected from Divisions across the Secretariat were provided with an updated assessment of the fundamentals

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GC-MS = gas chromatography-mass spectrometry.

of CIs in relevant articles of the Convention and parts of the Verification Annex, as well as experiences and lessons learned from recent contingency operation deployments.

71. From 24 to 28 July, the Secretariat conducted the first field deployment exercise of a Rapid Response and Assistance Mission (RRAM) with eight inspectors. This exercise was held in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, with the assistance and participation of personnel from the UK National CBRN Centre, Counter-Terrorism Policing, Dstl Porton Down and the Ministry of Defence.
72. From 3 to 7 July, six inspectors completed an instructor's course for self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) and hazardous materials (HAZMAT) in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. The course prepared a group of instructors to lead or train other inspectors for operations in toxic chemical or biological environments.
73. From 11 to 22 September, the Secretariat conducted specialised courses in the theory and practice of non-destructive evaluation techniques, levels I and II, in the Netherlands and Belgium.
74. During the reporting period, the United States of America continued to provide refresher courses on hazardous waste operations and emergency response (HAZWOPER), a requirement under American regulations for individuals who operate within their chemical weapons destruction facilities.

Scientific Advisory Board (SAB)

75. The Twenty-Sixth Session of the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) will be held from 16 to 20 October. The agenda will focus on the preparation for the Board's report on developments in science and technology to be submitted to the Fourth Review Conference. Furthermore, today's Science-for-Diplomats side event in the Ooms Room will review the SAB's workshop report on emerging technologies (SAB-26/WP.1, dated 21 July 2017). I am informed that the interactive briefing will include a drone demonstration as well as sampling and analysis with a smartphone, among other displays.
76. The SAB's fourth and final workshop in support of its report to the Fourth Review Conference was held in Zagreb, Croatia from 2 to 6 October. The workshop was co-organised with the Institute for Medical Research and Occupational Health in Zagreb, and focused on trends and developments in chemical production. The SAB will be reviewing the workshop's report, after which it will be made available to States Parties as a SAB working paper.
77. I take this opportunity to express my sincerest appreciation to the members of the SAB whose terms end this year. I am grateful for their service and contributions to the work of the OPCW. The efforts of the SAB in nurturing productive interaction between scientists and policymakers over the past years have been exemplary. I wish them success in their future endeavours and in their continued commitment to a world free of chemical weapons.
78. I also have the privilege of welcoming seven new members to the SAB. Three of those—Dr Khaldoun Bachari of Algeria, Ms Hoe Chee Chua of Singapore, and

Dr Maciej Sliwakowski of Poland—began their terms on 9 October. The remaining four—Professor Vladimir Dimitrov of Bulgaria, Dr Daan Noort of the Netherlands, Professor Syeda Razia of Bangladesh, and Dr Yasuo Seto of Japan—will commence their terms on 1 January 2018.

79. The Secretariat and the SAB interacted with experts from a variety of scientific fields at the CTBTO's 2017 Science and Technology Conference held from 29 to 30 June; the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry's (IUPAC) 46th World Chemistry Congress, held from 10 to 14 July; and the "Experiment Future" symposium held at the German Chemical Society's 150th anniversary in Berlin on 14 September. Insights gained through these events usefully inform the reports of the SAB and the recommendations they contain.

Education and outreach

80. The Advisory Board on Education and Outreach (ABEO) held its fourth meeting from 29 to 31 August. The report of the Board's meeting has been published and is available to delegations (ABEO-4/1, dated 31 August 2017). As mandated by the Conference decision establishing the ABEO (C-20/DEC.9, dated 3 December 2015), the Council has before it my report on the Board's activities in 2017 (EC-86/DG.29 C-22/DG.17, dated 4 October 2017).

International cooperation and assistance

81. Since the last session of the Council, the Secretariat has delivered 19 courses, seminars, and workshops to support the implementation of the Convention, including within the framework of the Africa Programme.
82. 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

83. As at 31 July 2017, 153 States Parties have adopted national implementing legislation. Among these States Parties, 122 have legislation covering all initial measures, an increase from 118 since the last reporting period. Another 31 States Parties have legislation covering some of the initial measures, while 39 have yet to adopt any legislation, a decrease from 42 States Parties since the last reporting period. The Secretariat will continue its efforts to enhance the capacity of Member States in adopting comprehensive national legislation.
84. The 15th regional meeting of National Authorities in Africa was held in the Gambia, from 18 to 20 July, and brought together 60 participants from 31 States Parties. The meeting was preceded by a panel discussion on the OPCW's achievements and challenges, which was arranged as part of the twentieth anniversary commemorative events.
85. As part of the Mentorship/Partnership Programme, representatives of the National Authority of Guatemala visited their Argentinian counterparts from 31 July to 4 August. The activities of the visit to Buenos Aires included meetings organised at

the Chemical Industry Chamber, at the Fire Department as well as with national Senators. Following the recommendations made after the visit, the Guatemalan National Authority plans to start using the electronic declarations tool for National Authorities (EDNA) and the SIX and to engage a chemistry expert in the decision-making of the National Authority. The return visit to Guatemala is planned to take place later in 2017.

86. The Secretariat has continued to provide support for legislation adoption. The 17th session of the internship programme for legal drafters and National Authority representatives was held from 7 to 11 August, with participation by representatives of Benin, Djibouti, and Ghana. In addition, Cameroon provided an overview of its experiences in legislative drafting. The three Member States successfully drafted legislation covering all the initial measures, and presented action plans describing the adoption process to be implemented in 2018 and 2019.
87. To enhance the practical knowledge and skills of National Authorities on verification, a training course on Article VI obligations (declarations and inspections) was held from 18 to 22 September in The Hague, bringing together 30 participants from 28 States Parties. Participants were able to take part in various hands-on exercises including mock inspections at chemical industry sites, organised with the support of the Dutch authorities.

Assistance and protection

88. During the intersessional period, the Secretariat provided tailored training programmes designed to strengthen the ability of more than 150 first responders from different regional groups to deal with the emergency situations arising from chemical incidents.
89. The 2017 three-component training cycle for States Parties of the Latin American and Caribbean (GRULAC) region was concluded with an exercise that was conducted in Brazil from 28 August to 1 September. The closing phase of this regional training was a confirmatory exercise designed to test the acquired skills and knowledge of participating first responders.
90. The Secretariat also continued its regional training cycle for police first responders in Asia. To this end, an advanced course for police first responders was conducted in the Republic of Korea from 25 to 29 September.
91. The Secretariat continued to hold train-the-trainers courses for instructors in the field of chemical response. Three training courses of this kind were conducted during the reporting period: in South Africa, from 14 to 25 August for States Parties of the East African Community; in the Netherlands, from 6 to 13 September; and in Spain, from 27 September to 6 October.
92. The Secretariat held a medical course in China from 18 to 22 September 2017, equipping medical specialists from 18 countries with knowledge and skills related to the handling of patients suffering from the effects of chemical warfare agents.
93. In support of the fourth phase of the Africa Programme and building on previous experience in protection planning in other African States Parties, the Secretariat

continued its efforts to promote the development of national programmes for protective purposes in Member States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) by means of a workshop held in Ghana from 18 to 22 September 2017.

International cooperation

94. The Secretariat has continued to carry out its capacity-building programme in the field of chemical safety and security. A chemical safety and security workshop for GRULAC countries was held in Mexico from 17 to 19 July. Participants included 32 experts from 15 Member States, comprising government officials responsible for regulating chemical industry, chemical industry representatives, academics, and chemists.
95. From 29 August to 1 September, the Secretariat organised an executive programme on integrated chemical management in Shanghai, China. Representatives of chemical industries, academia, and other relevant stakeholders participated in this programme.
96. From 18 to 20 September, the Secretariat organised a forum on the peaceful uses of chemistry, focusing on developing a chemical cradle-to-grave responsibility culture. More than 30 participants from 16 States Parties attended the forum held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The forum was aimed at providing a platform for sharing best practices and lessons learned on chemical management as well as relevant policies adopted by Member States to foster international cooperation for peaceful purposes in the field of chemical activities.
97. From 21 August to 1 September, the Secretariat organised an analytical skills development course in Umeå, Sweden, in collaboration with the Swedish Defense Research Institute (FOI), providing training to 19 qualified analytical chemists from 19 Member States.
98. From 11 to 22 September, the Secretariat organised a course jointly with the Finnish Institute for the Verification of the Chemical Weapons Convention (VERIFIN) on the enhancement of laboratory skills in nuclear magnetic resonance, which was held on VERIFIN premises. The course hosted six participants from six Member States.
99. From 12 to 15 September, the Secretariat conducted the second edition of a workshop entitled “Policy and Diplomacy for Scientists: Introduction to Responsible Research Practices in Chemical and Biochemical Sciences” in collaboration with the World Academy of Sciences (TWAS) and the InterAcademy Partnership (IAP). The workshop was held at the TWAS headquarters in Trieste, Italy, and was aimed at raising awareness among young scientists working in chemistry, biochemistry, biotechnology, and related fields, of the Convention and other international treaties and regulatory tools governing the transfer and use of chemicals. It also focused on sustainability, ethics, and responsibility in research practices, dual-use issues, and safety and security norms and standards in science. The workshop was attended by 20 participants from 20 Member States.
100. Furthermore, the Secretariat has provided ongoing support for scientists to participate in scientific events related to the peaceful uses of chemistry. Since the last session of the Council, a total of 14 participants have been sponsored under the Conference

Support Programme to attend four conferences on topics related to the Convention and the peaceful application of chemistry.

101. Under the Fellowship Programme, five new fellowships have been launched since the last session of the Council: at the Spiez Laboratory, Switzerland, for a fellow from the Democratic Republic of Congo; at the University of Western Cape in South Africa for a fellow from Nigeria; at Lund University in Sweden for a fellow from Uganda; and at VERIFIN in Finland for two fellows from Bangladesh and India, respectively. Three fellowships will commence in October for nationals of Uganda and Iran in Germany and for a national of Cameroon in Spain.

External relations

102. Since the last session of the Council, we have welcomed 13 new Permanent Representatives to the OPCW who presented their letters of credentials from: Benin, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Qatar, Slovenia, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
103. In July, I visited Australia and met with the Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ms Frances Adamson, and participated in a roundtable discussion at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. While there, I visited the Australian National University and the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI), where I participated in roundtable discussions on the strategic, forward-looking approach to dealing with immediate and future challenges facing the OPCW and Member States. In Melbourne, I delivered a keynote address at the 17th Asian Chemical Congress, incorporating the 19th General Assembly of the Federation of Asian Chemical Societies (FACS); visited the Australian Institute of International Affairs, the Australian War Memorial and the Defence Science and Technology Group (DST Group); and met with Assistant Secretary of the Australian Safeguards and Non-proliferation Office (ASNO), Dr John Kalish.
104. During my visit to Indonesia in July, I met with Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, Retno L.P. Marsudi; Minister for Industry of the Republic of Indonesia, Airlangga Hartato; as well as representatives of the Indonesian National Authority, the Indonesian Institute of Sciences, Responsible Care Indonesia and the Federation of Indonesian Chemical Industry. While in Indonesia, I toured the Research Center for Chemistry in Serpong, and gave a lecture that further underlined the responsibility of scientists in achieving a world free of chemical weapons. In Jakarta, I had a working lunch with ASEAN Permanent Representatives and briefed them on the OPCW and opportunities for regional organisations to establish Chemical Weapons Convention capacity-building hubs. I further travelled to Singapore, where I met with a number of senior officials and participated in National Day-related events.
105. Later in September, I visited Cameroon where I met with Prime Minister, Mr Philémon Yang; the Minister of External Relations, Mr Lejeune Mbella Mbella, and other officials. While in Yaoundé, I addressed the stakeholders forum for State Parties in Africa on adoption of national implementing legislation related to the Convention and delivered a speech at the International Relations Institute (IRIC) of Cameroon, where I met with the Director of IRIC, Mr Salomon Eheth. I was also

interviewed on Cameroon television and held a press conference with local media representatives.

106. During my visit to Chile at the end of September, I met with the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, H.E. Edgardo Riveros Marín; Director General for Foreign Policy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr Milenko E. Skoknic; and the Advisor to the Ministry General Secretariat of the Presidency, Mrs Antonia Urrejola. I also delivered a keynote address at the stakeholders forum for States Parties in Latin America and the Caribbean on the adoption of national implementing legislation and a statement at the conference “OPCW’s Role in New International Security Scenarios: the Syrian Experience”, organised by the Chilean Ministry of Foreign Affairs. While in Santiago, I participated in an interview with the Chilean newspaper La Tercera.
107. In September, the Deputy Director-General visited Kizner, the Russian Federation, where he participated in the ceremony marking the completion of demilitarisation operations at the Kizner chemical weapons destruction facility and the conclusion of the Russian Federation’s declared chemical weapons destruction operations.
108. On 5 September, the OPCW welcomed the annual United Nations Disarmament Fellowship programme participants to its Headquarters. Twenty-eight fellows participated in the programme this year.
109. The 17th induction workshop for diplomatic personnel involved in the work of the OPCW was held on 29 September and welcomed 12 Ambassadors and 55 delegates to the OPCW Headquarters for a day of briefings and interaction with Secretariat representatives. A visit to the OPCW Laboratory and Equipment Store was also conducted.
110. In public affairs, another film from the European Union-funded FIRES short documentary series “Which Side Do You Belong To?” has been produced and was unveiled at the International Open Day on 24 September. There were also two new additions to the event’s programme: a drawing session for children on the theme of peaceful uses of chemistry (including multi-lingual colouring books for small children) and a briefing for young people interested in becoming OPCW interns.
111. Since the last session of the Council, the Secretariat has continued to receive visiting groups at the OPCW Headquarters and provided presentations to 14 groups totalling 440 people. The visiting groups were composed of representatives of government agencies, students, diplomats, civil society, research institutes, and think tanks from Germany, Iran, the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, and the United States of America.
112. With the support of funding from the European Union, an OPCW exhibition capturing the Organisation’s progress since its inception was mounted and will be on display at other key events such as the Twenty-Second Session of the Conference.
113. The eighth edition of the T.M.C. Asser Institute’s annual Summer Programme, organised with the OPCW’s cooperation, took place from 4 to 8 September. Twenty-three junior- to mid-career professionals improved their knowledge about the diplomatic, legal, and technical aspects of disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. States Parties are encouraged to send new members of

delegations, or other professionals who could benefit from this training, to the ninth edition, which will take place in September 2018.

114. Preparations for the Twenty-Second Session of the Conference are in full swing. Seventy non-governmental organisations (NGOs) represented by some 200 individuals applied for participation, while the participation of 66 NGOs has been preliminarily approved by the General Committee. These numbers testify to an increase in NGO interest in Conference participation, as last year 63 NGOs and some 170 individuals applied.
115. The website for the Twenty-Second Session of the Conference is now online at csp22.opcw.org. The site contains all the documents and practical information for the Conference. Information will be added to the site as it becomes available. Preparations are under way for a live webcast of the opening and plenary sessions to ensure the widest possible audience.
116. Progress continues on the new OPCW website and its launch is anticipated for the first quarter of 2018.
117. On 16 November 2017 the Secretariat will host a conference at the OPCW Headquarters for academics and legal practitioners, particularly those specialising in public international law and the disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. This one-day conference, organised within the framework of the twentieth anniversary celebrations, will review the evolution of the Convention's legal regime and its achievements to date, and will explore avenues for adapting to future challenges. Further details on registration and participation may be found in the invitation letters that have been sent to Permanent Representatives.

Administrative and financial matters

118. As at 30 September 2017, the collection level for 2017 assessed contributions was 84.69% compared to 82.83% on the same date last year. I encourage States Parties that have not yet paid their outstanding contributions to do so at the earliest and in full.
119. The Secretariat has issued draft decision EC-86/DEC/CRP.8, which recommends the use of the 2015 cash surplus to cover the 2014 cash deficit and the costs of the Fourth Review Conference in 2018 and a transfer of the remaining surplus to the Working Capital Fund.
120. The Secretariat has continued to take the necessary steps to implement the revised compensation package for the Professional and higher categories associated with the December 2015 decisions of the United Nations General Assembly. The Secretariat presented the amendments to the OPCW Staff Regulations and Interim Staff Rules to the ABAF for consideration and comments at its Forty-Third Session in August this year. These amendments will be presented during this session of the Council. Following the Executive Council's consideration of the matter, a decision will be presented for adoption at the next session of the Conference.
121. The Secretariat has also taken the necessary steps to implement amendments to the Organisation's financial regulations and rules. These amendments have been in part

triggered by the implementation and the upcoming go-live of the new ERP system. The proposed amendments to the OPCW Financial Regulations and Rules—similar to the proposed amendments to the OPCW Staff Regulations and Interim Staff Rules—have gone through a rigorous internal review process, consideration by the ABAF at its Forty-Third Session, as well as informal consultation with States Parties. Following the Executive Council’s consideration of this matter, a decision will be considered for adoption at the Conference.

122. As you will recall, a Secretariat Note (S/1513/2017, dated 10 July 2017) was circulated to detail the implementation of the Junior Professional Officer (JPO) Programme at the OPCW. Divisions are currently preparing the terms of reference for posts that they have identified as requiring the services of a JPO. Once finalised, a list of available openings will be circulated to Member States and those interested in supporting the programme will be provided the opportunity to conclude agreements with the Secretariat, reserve JPO posts, and subsequently put forward candidates to be appointed to the programme. We look forward to working with Member States to ensure the success of this exciting new initiative.
123. In addition, the Secretariat has explored its options under the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) Programme. In its Note S/1530/2017 (dated 31 August 2017), the Secretariat has provided information on a pilot exercise to be run, utilising available resources. Our intention is to evaluate the impact of this initiative and to assess the potential benefits of pursuing a partnership with the United Nations on a wider scale in the future.
124. The Organisation has signed a contract for the implementation and support of the core solution for the ERP project. The implementation of the core solution has started and is planned to go live in January 2018.
125. Turning to knowledge management, the OPCW, like any organisation, has a wealth of knowledge at its disposal. However, retaining, transferring, and sharing relevant knowledge is never easy. It is even more challenging in organisations with tenure policies, such as the OPCW. Accordingly, at my request, a cross-divisional team led by the Administration Division undertook a significant project in 2017 that has enhanced our previous actions in knowledge management.
126. The project is now complete, and going forward we will invest in a senior leadership role that will coordinate our knowledge management activities into a coherent and effective set of actions that meets our objectives within the knowledge management strategic framework. Furthermore, taking into account the unique nature of information handled within the Verification Division, we have recruited a knowledge management specialist exclusively for that Division. From 2018 onwards, we will be reporting to the Member States on our progress and investments in this new area.
127. We have also approved a restructuring of the Human Resources Branch of the Administration Division. Bearing in mind the requirement to operate within existing resources, the restructuring is aimed at designing a more streamlined and efficient Branch, while at the same time reducing staff costs and positions.
128. I also wish to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the Director of Administration, Mr William Amoroso, who ends his tenure with the OPCW at the end

of this month. I wish to extend to him and his family my very best wishes for the future.

129. Mr Chairperson, this concludes my statement. Thank you for your attention.

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