



**REPORT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR VUSI BRUCE KOLOANE
ACTING CHAIRPERSON OF THE OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON
TERRORISM TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AT ITS EIGHTY-SEVENTH SESSION**

Mr Chairperson, Director-General, distinguished colleagues,

1. On behalf of H.E. Ambassador Momar Diop, who was unavailable to chair the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism (OEWG-T) at its meeting on Monday earlier this week, it is my pleasure to provide a short oral report as the acting Chairperson at that meeting.
2. The meeting focused on the topic of mutual legal assistance in the context of Article VII of the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter “the Convention”), and operative paragraph 8 of the Executive Council decision related to addressing the threat posed by the use of chemical weapons by non-State actors (EC-86/DEC.9, dated 13 October 2017). Paragraph 8, among other things, encourages States Parties to use any existing mutual legal assistance arrangements to cooperate in investigating incidents involving non-State actors.
3. In his opening remarks, the Director-General underscored the importance of ensuring the legal accountability of those who carry out acts prohibited by the Convention, and that this is a national responsibility under Article VII. He noted that bringing perpetrators to justice not only promotes respect for the norm against chemical weapons, but it deters future violations and provides some redress for victims. In this regard, mutual legal assistance reinforces the ability of States Parties to investigate and hold perpetrators accountable, and he also noted the Technical Secretariat's (hereinafter “the Secretariat”) role in supporting States Parties in carrying out their national implementation obligations, including in legal and legislative areas.
4. As the first of two presentations made under the substantive part of the meeting agenda, the Secretariat provided the context for legal assistance under the Convention. In particular, two forms of legal assistance could be contemplated under the second paragraph of Article VII. The first form relates to mutual legal assistance for putting in place the appropriate legal provisions necessary to implement the first paragraph of Article VII. This is currently facilitated by the Secretariat’s International Cooperation and Assistance Division. The second form relates to mutual legal assistance to enforce existing legal provisions. This may entail assistance in the investigation and prosecution of criminal offenses. The Secretariat also outlined the various ad hoc and treaty-based mutual legal assistance measures that exist between States Parties, including bilateral, regional and multilateral instruments.



5. The second presentation was made by Ms Danijela Horvat, from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia. Ms Horvat outlined a proposal for a new multilateral treaty on mutual legal assistance and extradition for the most serious international crimes. This initiative is being put forward by six countries, namely Argentina, Belgium, Mongolia, the Netherlands, Senegal, and Slovenia, and is still in the early stages of development.
6. A number of delegates exchanged their views following Ms Horvat's presentation, which explored the history of the initiative, an overview of the first Preparatory Commission meeting, the potential provisions of the proposed treaty, and the convergence of the Convention and the initiative's objectives. For instance, views related to what the initiative can offer that other international agreements and multilateral mechanisms currently do not; the possibility of overlaps between such agreements; and, how such an initiative would interact with regional arrangements.
7. Under the last agenda item of the meeting, Ms Veronika Stromsíková, Director of the Secretariat's Office of Strategy and Policy, briefed States Parties on a new United Nations-led Global Counter Terrorism Coordination Compact. The Compact is intended to help coordinate operational-level activities amongst the 38 United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force entities. Ms Stromsíková noted the Director-General's intention to sign the Compact document, which espouses the principles under which the entities will operate, and noted that the other 37 entities have been invited to sign as well.
8. Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to delegates for their active participation in the meeting. The next meeting of the OEWG-T is scheduled for 9 July 2018, the day before the Eighty-Eighth Session of the Executive Council.
9. Thank you Mr Chairperson, this concludes my report.

--- 0 ---