



Verification Division
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NOTE BY THE SECRETARIAT

PROVISION OF UNIQUE CODES FOR SCHEDULE 2 AND 3 PLANT SITES

1. Introduction

- 1.1 As indicated by the Director-General in his opening statements to the Executive Council at its Twenty-First and Twenty-Second Sessions (respectively EC-XXI/DG.8*, dated 3 October 2000, and EC-XXII/DG.12, dated 5 December 2000), the provision and appropriate application of codes for Schedule 2 and 3 plant sites has been a major concern for the OPCW Secretariat (hereinafter the "Secretariat"): "the efficiency of declaration processing, ... and inspection planning in the Secretariat, depend heavily on the consistent use of such unique plant site codes".
- 1.2 While more than 70% of States Parties have assigned a unique code to each of their declared plant sites, approximately 25% have not yet done so. However, of those States Parties which did provide the Secretariat with a unique code for each Schedule 2 or 3 plant site, 14% were subsequently inconsistent in their use of such codes. To compound this problem, a further 18% of codes assigned by some States Parties were identical with plant site codes assigned by other States Parties (for example, 1- or 2-digit codes which lacked any reference to a specific State Party).

2. Identifiers in current use

- 2.1 On the basis of paragraphs 6(a) and 6(b) of Part VII, paragraphs 6(a) and 6(b) of Part VIII, and paragraphs 4(a) and 4(b) of Part IX of the Verification Annex, the following information is available to assist the Secretariat in identifying a plant site:
- (a) the name of the plant site;
 - (b) the name of the owner, company or enterprise operating it; and
 - (c) the precise location of the plant site, including its address.
- 2.2 As the task of identifying a plant site by comparing all of the above identifiers has proven to be both extremely time-consuming and prone to error, the Secretariat has almost never been able to arrive at a definite conclusion in such cases. Some examples of scenarios with which the Secretariat has until now had to contend are set out below:

Example 1:

A plant site is sold. The new owner changes the name of the plant site, and moves the main entrance to a different side of the complex, which is consequently listed under a different street address. When the plant site is declared, with these new identifiers, in the State Party's subsequent declaration, it is simply not possible for the Secretariat to determine whether or not this plant site is identical to the one which was previously declared.

Example 2:

Two plant sites are declared in subsequent declarations: the plant sites bear the same name, have the same owner, and are both located in the same street, but simply have a different number in each case. Without further information the Secretariat is not in a position to determine whether the location of the main entrance has simply changed, or whether the two sites are completely different.

Example 3:

Two plant sites are declared in subsequent declarations with the same name, the same owner, and the same street address, but the name of the city is different in each case. It is impossible to determine with certainty whether this is attributable to coincidence, to clerical error, or to the provision of imprecise address details - a reference to the city as a whole in one case, and to a specific suburb of the same city in the other case.

- 2.3 In the majority of situations the identifiers vary just slightly from one year to the next, but, as example 2 shows, even minor differences can denote different plant sites. For this reason alone, 32% of all declared plant sites have been susceptible to identification discrepancies.
- 2.4 Given the critical importance assigned by the Convention to the correct identification of declared Schedule 2 and 3 plant sites, the Secretariat is of the view that any uncertainty in this regard is simply unacceptable. Where the correct and appropriate implementation of the verification provisions of the Convention is concerned, only hard facts, and not supposition, can be allowed to count.

3. Recommendations

In order to resolve this situation, the Secretariat recommends that the plant site coding system should in future be uniformly implemented by all States Parties in accordance with the following principles:

- (a) a unique plant site code shall be assigned to each plant site declared by each State Party;
- (b) the plant site code shall be truly unique, i.e. the same plant site shall always be referred to with the same unique code;

- (c) the Secretariat shall identify a plant site solely on the basis of its unique code. It follows from this that two declared plant sites shall be considered as identical if they both have the same unique code, even if all other identifiers (i.e. their names, the names of their owners, the name of the company or enterprise operating them, or their precise location, including the address) are different;
- (d) once assigned, a unique plant site code may not under any circumstances be transferred to any other plant site, even if the original plant site has ceased operations; and
- (e) plant site codes shall be used consistently across all the Schedules of the Convention, i.e. if the same plant site is declared in accordance with more than one Schedule (for example pursuant to both Part VII and Part VIII of the Verification Annex) the same plant site code shall be used in all such declarations.

4. Examples of plant site codes

For reasons of consistency the Secretariat recommends the application of the following simple and transparent method, which incorporates both a standard acronym for the name of the State Party in question (in accordance with appendix 1 of the Declaration Handbook 2000) and a four-digit numeral, with the two being separated by a forward slash:

Example 1: HUN/0001

HUN/0002

HUN/0003

Example 2: IRL/0001

IRL/0002

IRL/0003

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