



International Cooperation and Assistance Division

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ENGLISH only

NOTE BY THE SECRETARIAT

**THE SECOND MEETING OF THE PROTECTION NETWORK AND
WORKSHOP ON “CHEMICAL ALARMS FOR CIVIL PROTECTION”
THE HAGUE, THE NETHERLANDS
19 - 22 NOVEMBER 2001**

1. The Secretariat of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) is mandated to establish, “not later than 180 days after entry into force of this Convention and maintain, for the use of any requesting State Party, a data bank containing freely available information concerning various means of protection against chemical weapons as well as such information as may be provided by States Parties” (Article X, paragraph 5 of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC)).
2. The First Session of the Conference of the States Parties adopted a decision that the Secretariat establish a data bank on protection against chemical weapons, pursuant to Article X, paragraph 5 of the Convention (C-I/Dec. 53, dated 16 May 1997).
3. The Secretariat also has the responsibility, “within the resources available to it, and at the request of a State Party, [to] provide expert advice and assist the State Party in identifying how its programmes for the development and improvement of a protective capacity against chemical weapons could be implemented” (Article X, paragraph 5).
4. In order to implement the provisions mentioned in paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 above, in 1999 the OPCW established a “Protection Network” to address important issues relating to protection against chemical weapons. The membership of the network initially consisted of 18 technical experts from 16 countries who could provide such advice upon request. The first Protection Network meeting was held from 4-5 October 1999, and was meant to be an annual event.
5. Annual Protection Network meetings were intended to help the OPCW meet protection requirements and activities mandated under Article X of the Convention. It was envisaged that meetings would address issues relating to chemical weapons protection problems; provide an overview of the state-of-the-art means of detecting and controlling releases of toxic chemicals; provide a forum for interested companies to display and demonstrate detection and alarm equipment during workshops; maintain and improve the network of qualified experts able to assist the OPCW to carry out assistance and protection activities mandated by the CWC; and enable the OPCW to use the information provided and recommendations made at the meetings

as a basis for providing protection advice to States Parties during, or prior to, attacks involving chemical warfare agents.

6. The network is composed of highly qualified experts in the area of protection against chemical warfare agents who can generate ideas to develop and diversify the **data bank on protection**. To this end, the first meeting proposed establishing effective communication amongst the members and with the Secretariat, thus facilitating the free flow of ideas and suggestions relating to protection from network members. The network members, as experts, could also contribute to the OPCW's assistance operations.
7. The first Protection Network meeting in October 1999 discussed preparing an information package on CWC protection. It was envisaged that this information package would eventually be used by the OPCW as website material (protection against chemical warfare agents). The Protection Branch prepared a draft of the first part of this package, and requested network members to review and enrich the material with their expertise. Their feedback and recommendations will be discussed during the second meeting of the Protection Network.
8. The second annual meeting of the Protection Network was initially scheduled for 16-17 October 2000, to take place before the workshop on "Chemical Alarms for Civil Protection" during 18-19 October 2000. Practical reasons necessitated the cancellation of both the meeting and the workshop.
9. The workshop on "Chemical Alarms for Civil Protection" is now planned for two days (21-22 November 2001), and will take place after the network meeting at OPCW headquarters. Up to six technical experts representing protection companies are expected to deliver presentations on the subject of chemical alarms.
10. Initial contacts with some companies indicate that they are interested in displaying and demonstrating detection and alarm equipment during the workshop. It is proposed that these companies be provided with the space and facilities to display their protection equipment during workshops. The fact that the Secretariat intends to provide display facilities for exhibitions by interested companies for the benefit of States Parties shall not be construed to mean that the Secretariat is giving its approval to any of the displays. Representatives from companies would be invited to contribute to the workshop at their own cost.
11. The Protection Network meeting scheduled for 19-20 November 2001 is exclusively for the members of the network. The workshop on "Chemical Alarms for Civil Protection", and the associated display of protection equipment are, however, open to representatives of States Parties, and to companies involved in the production of protection equipment against chemical weapons.
12. Further details of the arrangements will be issued as the preparations proceed. Any questions may be addressed to the Assistance and Protection Branch, International Cooperation and Assistance Division:

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