



OPCW

Technical Secretariat

International Cooperation and Assistance Division

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NOTE BY THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT

**REPORT OF THE THIRD MEETING OF THE PROTECTION NETWORK
THE WORKSHOP ON CIVIL PROTECTION
AND THE EXHIBITION OF PROTECTION EQUIPMENT
THE HAGUE, 18 – 21 NOVEMBER 2002**

1. The third meeting of the protection network

Introduction

- 1.1 The third meeting of the protection network, which took place from 18 to 19 November 2002 at the OPCW Headquarters, was attended by 19 of its members from 17 States Parties: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belarus, China, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Finland, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Slovakia, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
- 1.2 The members of the network discussed their role in assisting with the implementation of Article X of the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter “the Convention”), which promotes national and international capacity-building for protection against chemical weapons (CWs). They also noted that, although paragraph 4 of Article X obliges States Parties to submit information on their national programmes for protective purposes, only 34 of them had done so since the entry into force of the Convention. In this context, members devoted a considerable amount of time to developing a form for submissions under paragraph 4 of Article X. They are now revising it, and will submit it to the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter “the Secretariat”) for dissemination to all Member States for comment.
- 1.3 Scientific and technical expertise in the fields of protection, as defined in Article X of the Convention, is a prerequisite for membership in the network. Paragraph 5 of Article X obliges the Secretariat to provide expert advice to any State Party and to assist it in developing programmes to improve its capacity to protect itself against CWs. The Secretariat recognises the need to expand the geographical representation of the members of the network to include participants from Africa and Latin America, and therefore calls upon Member States from these regions to provide the Secretariat with the names and curricula vitae of candidates who may be considered for membership.



- 1.4 The meeting opened with an overview of activities regarding the implementation of Article X in 2002 and presented the plans for 2003. This was followed by discussions on what role the network could play, both in national as well as international capacity building vis-à-vis Article X. The issues discussed included methods to increase the transparency of national programmes related to protective purposes, developing guidelines for declaring protection programmes, developing a manual for training programmes, the increased use of members as resources in their own regions, and possible contributions from the network at the next Assistex exercise. Four members of the network—from Australia, Finland, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and South Africa—made presentations on recent research carried out by their respective institutes. The topics discussed included the following:
- (a) chemical defence in Australia, and scientific and technical support;
 - (b) new Finnish innovations for military and civil protection against CWs;
 - (c) field measurement of the decrease in the functional performance of personnel wearing the chemical-protection ensemble in hot humid conditions; and
 - (d) medical treatment of victims exposed to CWs.
- 1.5 The Secretariat delivered presentations on the following: live-agent training, challenge inspections, scenarios for investigations of the alleged use of CWs, and the use of electronic sources as information for protection against CWs and other toxic chemicals. The workshop closed with a visit to the TNO-Prins Maurits Laboratory in Rijswijk, where the participants heard a lecture entitled, “Chemical Incident Simulators and Whole System Testing”. The lecture was followed by a tour of the laboratories in the complex.

2. Workshop on civil protection and exhibition of protection equipment

- 2.1 While the third meeting of the protection network was exclusively for its members, the workshop and the exhibition were open to all representatives of the OPCW, the National Authorities, and other organisations and departments from Member States, members of the protection network, representatives of chemical companies in the Member States, and staff members of the Secretariat. Nineteen members of the protection network, 44 representatives from chemical companies and institutions, 12 delegates from the permanent representations of 11 States Parties, 37 participants from National Authorities and other organisations and departments in the Member States, and several staff members from the Secretariat attended the workshop on 20 and 21 November.
- 2.2 In his opening statement, the Acting Director-General noted that “the information presently available to the Secretariat in relation to protective programmes of Member States, although incomplete, seems to indicate that many Member States lack adequate protective capabilities. This makes it important for the Secretariat to develop its approach towards providing Member States with adequate, appropriate and timely advice on their protective capacities.”

Participating companies and organisations

- 2.3 An estimated 150 people (not including Secretariat staff) visited an exhibition given by 21 companies and research institutions from Canada, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Netherlands, Russia, Sweden, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. They displayed their state-of-the-art, protection-related technologies, while the OPCW Equipment Store displayed the protective suits and equipment used during inspections.
- 2.4 Representatives from protection companies and organisations participated in the events of 20 and 21 November at their own expense. The exhibitors were provided with the facilities and space to display their equipment.
- 2.5 The workshop focused on the ways in which Member States could strengthen their capacity for protection against CWs, and included presentations on the following topics:
- (a) the system of crisis and disaster management for protection against CWs used in the Netherlands;
 - (b) the opportunities and limitations of Article X of the Convention;
 - (c) the experience Finland has acquired in environmental-control systems for civil protection;
 - (d) Canada's capability to support protection against CWs; and
 - (e) efforts made by the Netherlands Ministry of Defence to assist in civil defence in the event of a possible CW attack.
- 2.6 Each of the companies and organisations briefly introduced itself and demonstrated its products. Both the workshop and the equipment demonstration introduced the audience to state-of-the-art of technologies, as well as to the advances in research that have been developed in the field of protection against CWs and other toxic chemicals. Most of the products reflected new generations of protection systems that can detect and monitor low concentrations of chemical agents in the atmosphere, even at great distances.
- 2.7 The Director of the International Cooperation and Assistance Division (hereinafter "the ICA Division") closed the workshop by stating that he hoped that "this symbolic closure will not mean a closure on the all-too-relevant subject of civilian protection, but rather the renewal of a collective attempt by all of us who are responsible for national, regional, and international programmes on civil protection, be they from chemical companies, research institutes, academia, government departments, the press, or staff members of the Secretariat".
- 2.8 The Director emphasised the importance the Secretariat attaches to developing its approach to providing Member States with adequate, appropriate, and timely advice on their protective capacities. He called on those present for their support, in particular, he asked member of the protection network to provide assistance in

submitting declarations under paragraph 4 of Article X to any neighbouring countries in their respective regions that ask for it. He also requested that government departments and research institutes facilitate visits to their departments and institutes, and that the individuals and organisations concerned develop appropriate protection programmes. Finally, he asked the chemical industry to make its commercially available products more accessible to those Member States whose economies are either developing or in transition.

- 2.9 Given that one of the ICA Division's targets for 2003 is to develop a database on protection, it welcomed any contribution towards establishing such a database, and indicated that it planned to conduct six to eight national-protection courses in 2003. It also acknowledged the financial support announced by Norway for national protection capacity building in Central Asia. In conclusion, the Division noted that the OPCW could carry out its mandate more efficiently only as long as cooperation between it and the chemical industry continued. The exhibition was another example of the Secretariat's resolve to develop and sustain this cooperation.
- 2.10 Protection Week 2003 is scheduled to be held at OPCW headquarters from 17 to 20 November 2003.

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