



OPCW

Technical Secretariat

International Cooperation and Assistance Division

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NOTE BY THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT

NATIONAL AUTHORITY DISCUSSION FORUM

1. The Technical Secretariat (hereinafter “the Secretariat”) is pleased to announce the launching, on a trial basis, of the National Authority Discussion Forum (NADF) – an Internet-based, bulletin-board type of communication tool for National Authorities.
2. National Authorities have repeatedly expressed their interest in obtaining an electronic medium that would be managed by the Secretariat and that would provide a channel for interacting and exchanging experiences about matters related to the practical implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter “the Convention”) at the national level. In recognising the merits of this request and its implicit value for the work of the National Authorities, a cost-free, bulletin-board type product has been identified, adjusted for NADF purposes, and set up on the web server of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).
3. The NADF has been primarily designed to be used as an informal means of communication amongst National Authorities, and to facilitate and promote the exchange of practical experience and mutual assistance in relation to the national implementation of the Convention. It has also been designed as a cost- and time-efficient tool enabling the Secretariat, when requested, to monitor national implementation and to provide technical support and advice to National Authorities. Its objective is thus to facilitate the practical aspects involved in the implementation of the Convention. The NADF is not designed to be a discussion forum about any unresolved issues with regard to the implementation of the Convention. Users of the NADF need to be aware that confidential and sensitive information should not be discussed via the Internet, and that they should also refrain from using offensive and/or discriminatory language during their exchanges.
4. The NADF proposes a number of categories of forums that would provide a venue for discussing the most obvious issues of interest to National Authorities—for example, in such areas as implementing legislation, verification, international cooperation, assistance and protection, and implementation support. A separate category of discussion forums has been set up for the members of the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) and its temporary working groups (the forums for the temporary working groups are password-protected and are not accessible to other users). It also includes a forum for National Authorities’ comments and suggestions as to how the NADF can



be further improved. Additional NADF categories and related forums may be created, deleted, modified, or access-protected, as required.

5. The primary users will be National Authorities. They are invited to register as NADF users with reading and writing rights. SAB members and members of its temporary working groups are also invited to apply. Permanent Representations to the OPCW are invited to register with the NADF, but they will have reading rights only.
6. The procedures for registration and for NADF use are described in the Annex to this Note.
7. The NADF is being launched on a trial basis for a period of six months. After that, the Secretariat will provide Member States with its assessment of this communication tool and its recommendations as to whether the forum should be continued.
8. Additional information about the NADF may be obtained by mail: Implementation Support Branch, International Cooperation and Assistance Division, OPCW, Johan de Wittlaan 32, 2517 JR The Hague, the Netherlands; by telephone: +31 (0)70 416 3825; by fax: +31 (0)70 306 3535, or by e-mail: ipb@opcw.org.

Annex: National Authorities Discussion Forum: Procedures for Registration and Use

Annex

NATIONAL AUTHORITY DISCUSSION FORUM

PROCEDURES FOR REGISTRATION AND USE

1. The following steps need to be taken to register for this forum:
 - (a) Go to the forum address (www.opcw.org/na_forum).
 - (b) Click on the registration button.
 - (c) Complete the registration form (this includes setting your own password).
 - (d) Having completed registration, send an e-mail to the Implementation Support Branch (IPB) (ipb@opcw.org) indicating that this has been done.
2. National Authorities and Permanent Representations are requested to register as single-group users with one e-mail address that has been officially provided to the Secretariat. Members of the SAB and its temporary working groups are requested to provide the same e-mail address that they have already officially communicated to the Secretariat. If during registration an authorised user is submitting an e-mail address that is different from the one that has previously been officially provided, this authorised user is requested to mention this specifically in the e-mail to the IPB so that the Secretariat can validate the identity of the registered user. Authorised users are required to accept the conditions for use of the NADF as specified in the warning message that appears during registration. Registration of authorised users will be confirmed by the Secretariat by e-mail within a short period of time. When accessing the forum the next time, the authorised user will be able to log on using the user-name and password that was submitted at registration. National Authorities and Permanent Representations to the OPCW are expected to keep updated access rights to the NADF for their authorised users by changing their passwords as often as this is required.
2. Once authorised registered users access the forum, they will be able to see any new messages that have been posted, to post their own replies, or to start a discussion on a different topic. The NADF cannot be used to post documents, but users can post documents elsewhere on the Internet, and connect them to forum messages. Documents can also be sent directly by e-mail as file attachments. Shorter reference documents can also be copied directly into a message.
3. The ISB will administer the NADF, while other Divisions and Branches in the Secretariat will appoint moderators who will monitor discussions on those forums that are relevant to them and, as necessary, process any requests from National Authorities for clarification and technical support. Other Secretariat staff may be granted access with reading rights only, if this is requested by the relevant Division Directors. The Secretariat will follow discussions and will intervene only when necessary or requested, but it will moderate as little as possible. Please note that the NADF is a

separate network, so the Secretariat's moderators will not be able to follow discussions on line but will check the network on a daily basis.

4. Access to all discussion forums will be open to all registered authorised users, except when some forums may need to be additionally password-protected for selected users (currently, only the forums for members of the SAB's temporary working groups are password protected; other forums may also be password protected in the future if the relevant users request that this be done). Although access to the NADF will be restricted to authorised users and controlled by the Secretariat, it is designed to handle only open, unclassified, and non-sensitive information, and therefore users are advised to make use of only these kinds of information. In addition, users should be guided by, and will be subject to, the same strictures from the confidentiality perspective as in their other public communications, including the provisions of the Confidentiality Annex of the Convention and of the OPCW Policy on Confidentiality.

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