



OPCW

Technical Secretariat

Office of Special Projects

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NOTE BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

**FURTHER UPDATE ON PREPARATIONS FOR THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION**

Background

1. In S/555/2006, dated 10 March 2006, the Director-General submitted information on the initial preparations the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter “the Secretariat”) was making for the events that will mark the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter “the Convention”). In S/578/2006, dated 20 June 2006, he updated States Parties on the status of preparations. The present Note provides a further update.
2. At its Tenth Session the Conference of the States Parties (hereinafter “the Conference”) endorsed a proposal for the establishment of a Day of Remembrance for all victims of chemical weapons, and for the dedication in The Hague of a Permanent Memorial to them. The Conference also decided that the Day of Remembrance would be observed on 29 April each year—the date in 1997 on which the Convention entered into force.

Status of preparations

3. The OPCW is planning a series of events to mark the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention. These events, which will take place over the course of 2007, will also serve to promote awareness among the public of the work that is being done to further the object and purpose of the Convention. A number of the activities being planned will require the active involvement and cooperation of States Parties. The Director-General has asked the Director of the Office of Special Projects to coordinate preparations for the tenth anniversary, and all activities related to it.
4. The Secretariat has held extensive consultations with States Parties on various aspects of the activities being planned.
5. Important stakeholders, including the European Union, the European Chemical Industry Council (known as CEFIC), the International Council of Chemical Associations, and internationally recognised scientific institutions, have expressed



their readiness to help organise events related to the tenth anniversary. The Secretariat is also in contact, in this regard, with other international organisations.

6. The Secretariat is responsible for the programme of events, and coordinates closely with other institutions. As was noted in S/555/2006 and S/578/2006, no funds have been allocated in the OPCW Programme and Budget for any activities associated with the tenth anniversary. States Parties are therefore encouraged to contribute to the Tenth-Anniversary Trust Fund that the Secretariat has established. The Fund will be administered in accordance with the OPCW Financial Regulations.

Dedication of a Permanent Memorial to All Victims of Chemical Weapons

7. The main tenth-anniversary ceremony will be the unveiling in The Hague by Her Majesty Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands of a Permanent Memorial to All Victims of Chemical Weapons. The unveiling will take place on the afternoon of 9 May 2007. The Memorial will be located in the vicinity of OPCW headquarters. The Netherlands, through its Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has graciously undertaken to fully fund the commissioning of the Memorial, while the municipality of The Hague has generously offered to fund its placement and its maintenance.
8. The Secretariat has invited high-level delegations from States Parties and Signatory States, and from other international organisations, to attend the unveiling.
9. Prior to the unveiling, a brief ceremony will be held in the Ieper Room at OPCW headquarters in the presence of Her Majesty Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands.
10. Because several States Parties may be represented at the ceremony by high-level representatives, the Secretariat will be discussing with delegations the possibility of holding a special meeting on the morning of 9 May 2007.
11. Preparations are well underway for the establishment of the Memorial. Based on the advice the Secretariat has received from the municipality, the Director-General has commissioned Voebe de Gruyter, a highly regarded Dutch sculptor who was born in The Hague, to sculpt the Memorial. This work of art will embody the high goals and objectives that are enshrined in the Convention.

Other events being planned

12. Together with representatives of the chemical industry and a number of prestigious academic institutions, the Secretariat is planning two fora that will take place in the second half of 2007 in The Hague. One, the OPCW Academic Forum 2007, will be primarily for scientists and academics, and will focus on various aspects of the implementation of the Convention. The other, the OPCW Industry and Protection Forum 2007, will be devoted to protection and to issues relevant to the chemical industry. Representatives from the industry, from National Authorities, and from the scientific and academic communities will be invited to participate. States Parties are invited to contribute to preparations for both fora.

OPCW Academic Forum 2007

13. Plans for this Forum are moving ahead, and dates have been set: 18 and 19 September 2007. The Forum will bring together leading academics, political experts, and scientists, as well as diplomats and policy-makers. Participants will examine the history of the Convention and of the OPCW, and the political and technical challenges that will confront the OPCW in the future. Specifically, participants will have the opportunity to discuss how the OPCW can adapt to the new security environment and to the changes in the chemical industry, including those involving new chemicals and processes. The proceedings of the forum, including discussions on presentations, will be published.

OPCW Industry and Protection Forum 2007

14. This Forum is in its initial planning stages, and will take place in the third quarter of 2007. No funding has been allocated for the Forum in the Programme and Budget, and support for it will thus be in the form of voluntary contributions.
15. The Forum will provide a platform for discussions among the OPCW and National Authorities, the chemical industry, international organisations, and experts on issues of interest to the chemical industry in regard to implementing the Convention. The overall goal of the Forum will be to assist the chemical industry in enhancing the framework within which it cooperates with the OPCW, and in particular with National Authorities, and thus to strengthen further the implementation of the Convention.
16. During the Forum, workshops and training will be offered to representatives of National Authorities and of the chemical industry (and, specifically, of industry associations) on industry verification, on security standards within the chemical industry, and on assistance and protection. Plans are also being made for an exhibition of inspection and of protection equipment.

Initiatives by States Parties

17. Preparations are also underway for events that will be taking place in States Parties. A number of States Parties have already announced or indicated their intention to host conferences and gatherings devoted to the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention.
18. Germany is organising a major conference on the Convention in Berlin, to be held in April 2007.
19. The Government of Belgium has announced that, in mid-May 2007, it will host a seminar in Brussels oriented towards Belgian stakeholders and international and regional organisations based in that city, and intended to provide a platform for a discussion of effective approaches to multilateralism, in particular as regards the implementation of the Convention.

20. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland has informed the Secretariat of its plans to host a national event in March 2007 as part of the overall activities related to the tenth anniversary.
21. The United States of America has announced its intention to organise a tenth-anniversary event in the fall of 2007. Croatia is also working on an event to be held in the first half of 2007.

Cooperation with the Host Country

22. As noted above, the Government of the Netherlands has graciously agreed to fully fund the commissioning of the Permanent Memorial. It will also fund the OPCW Academic Forum. In addition, the municipality of The Hague has confirmed that it will provide fund the placement and the maintenance of the Memorial.
23. The Secretariat recognises the indispensable advice and technical support it has received thus far from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the municipality of The Hague, and a number of Dutch institutions.

Cooperation with the United Nations

24. As a key partner of the OPCW, the UN will be cooperating with the Secretariat as it makes further preparations for the tenth anniversary. In this context, the Director-General has extended a formal invitation to the Secretary-General-designate of the UN, H.E. Mr. Ban-Ki moon to participate in the events of 9 May 2007.

High-level meeting on the tenth anniversary at the sixty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly

25. In order to take advantage of the presence of high-level representatives of UN Member States at the sixty-third session of the UN General Assembly, the Secretariat, in conjunction with the UN Department for Disarmament Affairs, is considering organising a high-level meeting devoted to the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention.

Possible further initiatives by States Parties

26. The Secretariat continues to encourage States Parties and their institutions to organise their own activities in connection with the tenth anniversary, such as holding exhibitions, fostering the publication of articles and monographs, issuing stamps, and organising conferences or symposia on issues related to the Convention. The Secretariat stands ready to render practical assistance, on request, in this connection.
27. The participation of States Parties is essential to the success both of preparations for tenth-anniversary events, and of the events themselves. The Secretariat therefore encourages States Parties to continue to offer their support in the lead-up to this important milestone in the history of the Convention and of the OPCW.