



OPCW

Technical Secretariat

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NOTE BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF A CONFIDENCE-BUILDING EXERCISE
FOR ANALYSIS OF BIOMEDICAL SAMPLES**

1. The Director-General wishes to inform Member States of the schedule and arrangements for a confidence-building exercise for analysis of biomedical samples relevant to the investigation of incidents of alleged use of chemical weapons.
2. Member States are invited to nominate laboratories with interest and/or expertise in the analysis of biomedical samples to participate in this exercise. The exercise is not limited to previous participants in the official OPCW Proficiency Test.
3. The purpose of the exercise is to begin building expertise in the analysis of biomedical samples relevant to the investigation of alleged use. The exercise is not intended to be a test of current laboratory proficiency, but rather a means for the various laboratories and the OPCW Technical Secretariat to examine the specific requirements for biomarker identification at trace levels.
4. The exercise will consist of a number of samples for which the laboratory will be requested to identify and determine the approximate concentration of a specified set of metabolic products of scheduled chemicals.
5. Approximately one month prior to sample dispatch, specific details of the reporting requirements and suggested analytical procedures will be distributed to all laboratories that are nominated. Laboratories are encouraged to use their own methods of analysis as well as those suggested and, where possible, to compare the results in their reports. Unlike the OPCW Proficiency Tests, technical assistance, either by telephone or e-mail, will be available during the exercise.
6. The results of this exercise will not affect any laboratory currently designated or seeking designation by the OPCW. Participation in this exercise does not replace the requirement of "one OPCW Proficiency Test per calendar year" needed to retain designation.



7. The exercise schedule is as follows:

- (a) The exercise is being conducted with samples prepared by the Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research—TNO Defence, Security and Safety, Rijswijk, the Netherlands. Samples will be dispatched from TNO on or around 4 September 2009. The test is scheduled so that laboratories that are also participating in the 26th Official OPCW Proficiency Test can participate in this exercise. The exercise is being coordinated with the assistance of Dr Robin Black from the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl), the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
- (b) Laboratories are requested to submit analysis reports within 28 calendar days of receiving the sample. Reports will be evaluated by Dstl and TNO.
- (c) States Parties should notify the OPCW Laboratory by 15 August 2009 of any laboratory nominated to take part. The notification should include the name and address of the laboratory as well as the name, mailing address, fax number, and e-mail address of the laboratory contact person. The OPCW Laboratory will provide more details on the nature of the test and the formatting requirements of the reports to each laboratory that is nominated.

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