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External Relations Division  
S/1214/2014  
16 September 2014  
ENGLISH only

**NOTE BY THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT**

**COMMEMORATION OF THE CENTENARY  
OF THE FIRST LARGE-SCALE USE OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS  
21 APRIL 2015  
IEPER, BELGIUM**

**Background**

1. The year 2015 marks the centennial of the first large-scale use of chemical weapons during World War I on 22 April 1915 in Ieper, Belgium. The attack marked the beginning of regular use of chemical weapons over the past century to horrific effect, as well as the production of large stockpiles. At the same time, chemical warfare engendered decades-long diplomatic efforts to control and ultimately eliminate these weapons under the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter “the Convention”). Since the Convention came into effect in 1997, near-universal adherence to it has been achieved and it has become a global norm. Now, on the eve of the Ieper anniversary, implementation efforts by States Parties have brought the goal of a world free of chemical weapons well within our reach.
2. To mark this historic occasion, the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter “the Secretariat”) proposes a commemorative event for all States Parties of the OPCW on 21 April 2015 in Ieper, with a programme of related proceedings. The Secretariat acknowledges the generous assistance provided by the Government of Belgium and the Ieper City Council in facilitating this event.

**Objectives**

3. This commemorative event will have wide-ranging objectives that are intended to convey a historical rather than institutional outlook that will resonate with the broader community. These include recalling the tragic history of chemical warfare and honouring the memory of all victims of chemical weapons, as well as restating States Parties’ commitment to making the gains in chemical disarmament permanent, achieving universal adherence to the Convention, and dedicating science to the service of peace. A declaration encompassing these elements—“The Ieper Declaration”—will be issued on behalf of the OPCW during the event. To maximise their impact, the entire proceedings will be open to the media.



## **Elements of the event**

### The commemorative gathering of States Parties

4. The commemorative gathering will be held on 21 April 2015 at the Het Perron Cultural Centre in Ieper, Belgium (N37b 8900, Ieper, Belgium), from 11:00 to 13:00. Representatives of all States Parties and special guests, including from the Host Country, will be invited to attend. It is anticipated that States Parties will be represented by the Permanent Representative accompanied by one other delegate. The Chairperson of the Conference of the States Parties (hereinafter “the Conference”) will lead the programme, which will include a limited number of statements by the Chairperson of the Conference, the Director-General of the OPCW, a representative of the Host Country, and other dignitaries, as well as commemorative readings. All statements will be limited to no more than five minutes. All proceedings will be conducted in English.

### Remembrance of all victims of chemical weapons

5. A remembrance ceremony for all victims of chemical weapons around the world will be held at the Menin Gate Memorial, where wreaths will be laid on behalf of the OPCW. A “Last Post” ceremony will be specially arranged for this occasion.

### The OPCW chemical disarmament exhibition

6. The OPCW exhibition “Combating Chemical Weapons” will be opened at the Souterrains near the Menin Gate.

### Unveiling of OPCW commemorative plaque

7. An OPCW commemorative plaque will be unveiled and later mounted on the wall of the In Flanders Field Museum building, to serve as a permanent marker of this event.
8. The tentative programme for the event is included as Annex 1 to this Note.

## **Logistical arrangements**

9. Transportation from The Hague and Brussels will be arranged for participating delegations to attend the day-long event. A light lunch will be served at the “Het Perron” Cultural Centre, where the commemorative gathering will be held.

## **Deadline for registration**

10. Representatives of States Parties are requested to register with the Secretariat **no later than 30 March 2015**, using the registration form attached hereto as Annex 2. The Secretariat will post the form online and send out reminders to expedite arrangements.

Annex 1: Tentative Programme

Annex 2: Registration Form

**Annex 1**

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**TENTATIVE PROGRAMME**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Programme</b>	<b>Notes</b>
07:30	Delegations leave The Hague for Ieper by bus	Separate arrangement for delegations from Brussels
11:00	Commemorative gathering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OPCW short film</li> <li>• Statements</li> <li>• Commemorative readings</li> <li>• Musical interludes</li> <li>• Issuance of the declaration</li> </ul>	Het Perron Cultural Centre
13:00	Unveiling of the OPCW plaque by the Conference Chairperson and the Director-General	Het Perron Cultural Centre
13:10	Lunch hosted by the Director-General	Het Perron Cultural Centre
14:00	Delegations leave the Cultural Centre by bus for the remembrance ceremony	The Menin Gate Memorial
14:30	Opening of the OPCW exhibition by the Conference Chairperson, the Director-General, and a representative of the Host Country	The Souterrains (walking distance from the Menin Gate)
16:00	Delegations visit In Flanders Field Museum	Optional for delegations
16:30	Delegations leave for The Hague / Brussels	
19:30	Delegations arrive in The Hague	

**Annex 2**

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**REGISTRATION FORM**

Please submit the completed form **no later than 30 March 2015** to:  
The Head, Government Relations and Political Affairs Branch  
Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons  
Johan de Wittlaan 32, 2517 JR The Hague, the Netherlands  
Fax: +31 (0)70 416 3280; e-mail: grb@opcw.org

Please type or use **BLOCK LETTERS**

Name of State Party		
Name of Permanent Representative		
Name of one other delegate		
Choice of transport	Bus from the OPCW <input type="checkbox"/>	Private arrangement <input type="checkbox"/>
Choice of departure place	OPCW Headquarters, The Hague <input type="checkbox"/> Central Station, Brussels <input type="checkbox"/>	
E-mail address		
Telephone numbers	Home	
	Work	
	Mobile	

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