



NOTE BY THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT

**EVENT TO MARK THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE FOUNDATION OF THE
ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS
THE HAGUE, THE NETHERLANDS
2 – 4 MAY 2016**

Background

1. The Executive Council (hereinafter “the Council”) at its Eightieth Session adopted a decision (EC-79/DEC.4, dated 9 July 2015) to designate 29 April—the date on which the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter “the Convention”) entered into force in 1997—as the International Day for the Foundation of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (“OPCW Day”).
2. The Technical Secretariat (hereinafter “the Secretariat”) will organise an event to celebrate the inaugural OPCW Day at OPCW Headquarters from 2 to 4 May 2016. The theme for the 2016 event will be: “Chemical Safety and Security in a Technologically Evolving World”. The event, a forward-looking conference celebrating OPCW Day, will bring together stakeholders from across relevant communities to discuss technological innovation and a world free of chemical weapons.
3. The event builds on recommendations made by the Third Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention on science and technology, the promotion of outreach, capacity building, education, public diplomacy, the chemical safety and security culture, and interaction with all relevant stakeholders (paragraphs 9.15, 9.16, and 9.126, and subparagraphs 9.118(k), 9.131(k), 9.131(l), 9.155(d), and 9.155(n) of RC-3/3*, dated 19 April 2013).
4. The 2016 event represents the beginning of a series of conferences to celebrate OPCW Day with themes that will change from year to year. The inaugural event in 2016 will further serve as a point of departure for the Secretariat with regard to arrangements and planning for a larger event in 2017, marking the twentieth anniversary of the OPCW.

Purpose

5. As the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention approaches and the completion of the destruction of declared chemical weapons stockpiles draws near, the relevance of chemical disarmament in a world with increased access to



chemicals, instantaneous communication, globalised chemical economics, and disruptive technological advancement must be addressed. As the Convention is a disarmament treaty underpinned by science and technology, its effective implementation requires continual review of technological changes and engagement with those driving the advances in this field. It is important to explore innovative ways of ensuring that the norms and objectives of the Convention remain relevant.

6. The 2016 event will focus on building networks across States Parties, partner organisations (including international, industry, and scientific organisations), and emerging and enabling technologies, so as to identify challenges and opportunities facing chemical disarmament in the near and distant future. This event will draw upon the science-and-technology basis of chemical disarmament and its long-term need to remain grounded in sound scientific principles. Additionally, it will facilitate science-policy engagement and raise broader awareness of the long-term goals and needs of the Convention.

Programme

7. The programme will consist of plenary sessions, panel discussions, interactive workshops, and an exhibition. Networking opportunities, including poster sessions and a visit to the OPCW Laboratory, are also envisioned.
8. The plenary discussions and workshops will focus on three thematic areas:
 - (a) chemical safety and security: issues, concerns, and needs for the future;
 - (b) future scenarios: a discussion of challenges and opportunities drawing on the experiences of experts in innovation and disruptive technological development; and
 - (c) technology foresight: assessment of applications and readiness levels of current and emerging technologies.
9. The exhibition will allow companies developing CBRNE-related¹ equipment or products, developers of emerging and enabling technologies with relevance to the science of chemistry, and designated laboratories of the OPCW to display and provide information on their work. Some exhibitors may be invited to participate in panel discussions and workshops within the overall programme. The exhibition is expected to consist of 25 booths.
10. Poster sessions will provide a forum for all conference attendees to display information about their work and its relevance to the Convention. The posters are to be displayed in a common area where participants can view and informally discuss their content. Poster presentations will be selected through submission of abstracts. Due to limited space, several poster displays will be held over the course of the event to accommodate all participants.

¹ CBRNE = Chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosives.

Participation

11. Participants will be drawn from representatives of States Parties, partner organisations (including international, industry, and scientific organisations), members of the Scientific Advisory Board (and its temporary working groups), the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach, scientists from OPCW designated laboratories, representatives from the field of science-and-technology development, CBRNE centres of excellence, non-governmental organisations, academia, students, and other stakeholders of the Convention.
12. Further information and updates on this event will be made available via the OPCW public website and OPCW social media.

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