

## Information Note<sup>1</sup>

- Event:** Global Stakeholders Forum on the Adoption of National Implementing Legislation on the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)
- Organizer:** Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)
- Date and Venue:** 3-4 December 2019, The Hague, the Netherlands

### Background

- On 18 October 2019, the Director of the International Cooperation and Assistance Division of the OPCW sent a letter to the Chair of the 1540 Committee inviting the Committee to take part in a Global Stakeholders Forum on the Adoption of National Implementing Legislation on the Chemical Weapons Convention.
- The Forum aimed to enhance the understanding of relevant stakeholders of the obligations and national implementation measures under the CWC, and their respective roles in the legislative adoption process; share best practices in implementation of the CWC; and update the national roadmaps on the process of adoption of national implementing legislation.

### Overview

#### Day 1:

During the Opening Ceremony, the Deputy Director General of the OPCW, Ambassador Odette Melono, officially opened the Forum noting that only 119 out of 192 States Parties to the CWC have legislation covering all initial measures. She underlined that full implementation of the Convention through legislation is part of the OPCW's mission to prevent the re-emergence of chemical weapons now that stockpile destruction is nearly complete. DDG Melono's introduction was followed by remarks from European Union Representative to the OPCW, Mr Mika-Markus Leinonen, who confirmed the importance of legislation in preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons and observed that sharing of practices and effective practices was an excellent way for CWC States Parties to avoid mistakes and learn from others when drafting their own legislation.

The Opening Ceremony was followed by introductory remarks from the recently appointed Director for International Cooperation and Assistance. She stressed the importance of

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<sup>1</sup> For information - not an official report. The views expressed here do not necessarily represent those of the 1540 Committee or of the organizers or participants in the event.

interministerial co-operation, or whole of government approach, and national champions in implementing the CWC.

After a tour de table, the participants heard an overview of the status of implementation of the CWC from an official in the Implementation Support Branch. She observed that though 119 States Parties have implemented all initial measures, 40 have only some and 33 have none. She added that the OPCW has been working to bring up the level of implementation through regional fora, especially in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and that the point has been reached where many countries are “mid-stream” in their implementation efforts. This Forum was, accordingly, an effort to bridge the gap between those remaining countries that have no or only some initial measures and those that have all of them in force. She concluded by encouraging the participants – including parliamentarians, chairs of CWC National Authorities, and a foreign minister – to share best practices, update their national “roadmaps” for implementation and exchange ideas on how to move languishing legislation forward.

During the first session on promoting a comprehensive approach to CWC implementation through effective coordination between the National Authority and relevant stakeholders, the participants heard from the moderator regarding feedback to the OPCW on obstacles to adopting legislation and about the OPCW’s national implementation framework. The participants also heard national presentations from Chile, Kenya, Nepal, Paraguay and Trinidad and Tobago.

In Session 2, the participants discussed the role of the CWC in strengthening national security and promoting economic development. The OPCW moderator observed that there are a number of national security benefits that arise from effectively implementing the CWC, including having in place prohibitions on chemical weapons-related activities, controls on toxic chemicals, and emergency preparedness and response mechanisms; as well as ensuring the correctness and completeness of scheduled chemical declarations. She added that there are a number of economic development benefits as well, including promoting the peaceful uses of chemistry, international co-operation in the field of chemistry, building up the capacity of chemists and analytical laboratories, and safe and secure management of chemicals and production facilities which in turn promotes a safe environment for business.

The 1540 Committee Expert gave his presentation on the interface between resolution 1540 (2004) and the CWC, and the status of implementation of States of their obligations under the resolution on non-proliferation of chemical weapons. The Expert introduced resolution 1540 (2004) to those national participants who may not have been familiar with it, drew attention to the resolution’s references to the international non-proliferation framework, and then described the links between the CWC and operative paragraphs (OPs) 2, 3(a)-(b) and 3(c)-(d) of the resolution. He also presented statistics on global and regional implementation of the OPs. We then heard from a number of officials from participating States on this session’s topic including Kenya, Mongolia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone.

Day 2:

The third session focused on national implementation issues. The discussants for this session included participants from Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Sierra Leone and Georgia. Other countries spoke during this session, especially on the importance of proper financing to ensure CWC implementation once legislation is adopted.

During the fourth and final session on the role of Parliamentarians in enhancing national implementation of the CWC, the participants heard from parliamentarians from Angola, Myanmar, Nigeria, Philippines and Trinidad and Tobago. An OPCW official explained that though 57 States Parties had legislation which had received government approval, only six currently had bills in their national legislatures. For this reason, the OPCW has been engaging with parliamentarians to encourage them to get the pending bills adopted.

### **Additional Comments**

For further information, please contact the 1540 Committee experts by e-mail at [1540experts@un.org](mailto:1540experts@un.org).