

# Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

## *Introduction*

In the months following the Third Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) held in April 2013, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has focused on implementing CWC recommendations. In effect, the results from the Third Review Conference continue to be of the utmost importance as it has influenced the two major challenges undertaken by the OPCW: the role science and technology play in the successful eradication of chemical weapons, and the neutralization of the Syrian Arab Republic's (Syria) chemical weapons stockpile.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, OPCW's activities have taken special relevance in the international arena since December 2013, when the organization's newly re-appointed Director General; for example Ahmet Üzümcü, received the 2013 Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of the OPCW.<sup>2</sup> To fully cover the recent activities of the OPCW, this update will provide a brief synopsis of the progress being made on different relevant issues.

## *Recent Activity*

The OPCW Executive Council held its seventy-fourth session from 8 to 11 October 2013.<sup>3</sup> A particular focus of the agenda was the status of destruction of remaining chemical weapons stockpiles by possessor states.<sup>4</sup> In this respect, the Council recalled States to comply with the provisions of the Convention and its Annex on Implementation and Verification.<sup>5</sup> Other related issues on universality, destruction-related plans, and the implementation of the International Support Network for Victims of Chemical Weapons were the basis for discussions at the Conference of State Parties.

The Conference of the States Parties (CSP) met from 2 to 5 December 2013 at its Eighteenth Session held in The Hague.<sup>6</sup> One of the issues on the agenda was the lack of compliance by the United States of America, Russian Federation and Libyan Arab Jamahiriya of the Conference of State Parties' decision C-16/DEC that set the deadline for the destruction of their chemical weapons stockpiles as of 29 April 2012.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, the Conference acknowledged that measures for achieving such purpose are currently being implemented.<sup>8</sup>

## *Recent Policy Outcomes*

The Seventy-Fourth Session of the OPCW Executive Council reached some important outcomes regarding chemical weapons destruction, non-proliferation, and implementation. Effectively, the Conference recognized the Director-General's strategy for reaching universality of the CWC by welcoming the accession of both Syria and Somalia during 2013.<sup>9</sup> Also noteworthy, the Conference commended the International Support Network for Victims of Chemical Weapon's establishment of a voluntary trust fund.<sup>10</sup> In January 2014, it was reported at the OPCW's Executive Council Thirty-Seventh Meeting that contributions to the Syria Trust Fund for the Destruction of Chemical Weapons are at a total of EUR 11.8 million.<sup>11</sup>

Policy outcomes were also relevant at the Eighteen Session of the Conference of State Parties. One relevant agenda item was the international cooperation for peaceful purposes in the field of chemical activities. Member States reaffirmed that the full and non-discriminatory implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention is essential for

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<sup>1</sup> OPCW Conference of the States Parties, *Report of the Third Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention*, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> OPCW, *Speech by Director-General OPCW Ahmet Üzümcü on Working Together for a World Free of Chemical Weapons and Beyond 2013 Nobel Peace Prize Lecture at Oslo City Hall on 10 December 2013 in Oslo*, 2013.

<sup>3</sup> OPCW Executive Council, *Report of the Seventy-Fourth Session of the Executive Council*, 2013.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 6.6.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> OPCW Conference of the States Parties, *Report of the Eighteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties*, 2013.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 9.4.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 9.19.

<sup>11</sup> OPCW, *Thirty-Seventh Meeting, Statement by the Director-General to the Executive Council at its Thirty-Seventh Meeting*, (EC-M-37/DG.3), 8 January 2014.

complying with its object and purpose.<sup>12</sup> To this end, the Conference of State Parties agreed on the necessity to fully cooperate with National Authorities and other national and regional organizations.<sup>13</sup> The area of education on the obligations of the CWC is of special importance since the OPCW has declared 2014 as the year of “awareness-raising on the Chemical Weapons Convention.”<sup>14</sup>

### **Implementation**

Much of OPCW’s latest efforts have been toward ensuring that the Executive Council’s decision of 27 September 2013 is met. This decision calls for the complete destruction of Syria’s stockpile by June 2014.<sup>15</sup> Under this decision, Syria was also bound to surrender its stockpile as per the *Initial Declaration and General Plan of Destruction*, by 24 October 2013, to which Syria has complied.<sup>16</sup> Per the decision rendered from the Thirty-Fourth Meeting of the Executive Council, Syria is also required to abide by provisions calling for monthly reporting regarding “activities on its territory related to the destruction of chemical weapons and CWFs.”<sup>17</sup> In fact, the first report was successfully submitted on 20 December 2013.<sup>18</sup>

Regarding field operations, the OPCW-UN Joint Mission on Syria has successfully verified 22 of the 23 sites disclosed by Syria.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, the Joint Mission stated that equipment used for producing chemical weapons in Syria has also been destroyed.<sup>20</sup> As of 7 January 2014, the first batch of chemical weapons was removed from Latakia, a major port located on the western border of Syria.<sup>21</sup> Aided by the OPCW-UN Joint Mission in Syria, the operation showcases an important advance on Syria’s willingness to comply the international relevant obligations under the Convention.<sup>22</sup> Although the operation was delayed by a little more than a week, the successful transition may be viewed as an indication of compliancy with future deadlines.<sup>23</sup> Until 23 December 2013, the Syria Trust Fund for the Destruction of Chemical Weapons stands at 10.2 million EUR and has received numerous pledges from Member States.<sup>24</sup> Further contributions by the governments of the Republic of Korea, Japan, and the European Union are expected to reach more than 22 million EUR in 2014.<sup>25</sup>

### **Conclusion**

In late December 2013, State parties held a meeting in Moscow to finalize the transportation details of Syria’s chemical weapons.<sup>26</sup> Soon after, the Thirty-Seventh Meeting of the OPCW’s Executive Council took place on January 8, 2014.<sup>27</sup> The agenda for this meeting initially projected some kind of discussion between the United States of America and the Secretariat regarding the U.S.’ voluntary agreement to destroy Syria’s chemical weapons aboard the M.V Cape Ray (a U.S. vessel) in the Mediterranean, using a process called hydrolysis.<sup>28</sup> In an effort to keep the momentum, at the Thirty-Seventh Meeting, the Secretariat and the United States developed an elaborate plan for

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<sup>12</sup> OPCW Conference of the States Parties, *Report of the Eighteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties*, 2013, para. 17.1.

<sup>13</sup> OPCW, *Report of the Third Meeting of the Scientific Advisory Board’s Temporary Group on Education and Outreach in Science and Technology Relevant to the Chemical Weapons Convention*, 2014, p.7.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Harding, *Syria Misses Chemical Weapons Deadline*, 2013.

<sup>16</sup> OPCW, *Syria Submits its Initial Declaration and a General Plan of Destruction of its Chemical Weapons Programme*, 2013.

<sup>17</sup> OPCW Executive Council, *Thirty Seventh Meeting, Progress in the Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme*, 2013.

<sup>18</sup> OPCW Executive Council, *Progress in the Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme*, 2013.

<sup>19</sup> OPCW, *Mission Updates, Further Progress Made by the Team, Following Completion of 27 October and 1 November Targets*, 2013.

<sup>20</sup> BBC News, *Syria Chemical Weapons Equipment Destroyed, says OCPW*, 2013.

<sup>21</sup> Austin and Arkin, *UN Stops Counting Syrian Dead As First Chemical Weapons Removed From the Country*, 2014.

<sup>22</sup> OPCW, *First Priority Chemicals in Syria Transported to Latakia and Removed from Country*, 2014.

<sup>23</sup> Gladstone, *First Batch of Deadly Chemicals Exported From Syria*, 2014.

<sup>24</sup> OPCW Executive Council, *Thirty Seventh Meeting, Progress in the Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme*, 2013.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 20.

<sup>26</sup> OPCW, *Thirty Seventh Meeting, Statement by the Director-General to the Executive Council at its Thirty-Seventh Meeting*, 2014.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Submarian, *US Volunteers to Destroy Syrian Chemical Weapons*, 2013.

finalizing the destruction of Syria's stockpile and have since submitted the plan for the Council's approval.<sup>29</sup> Ultimately, the meeting commenced by applauding new OPCW-UN Joint Mission activity and their successful removal of chemicals from the port of Latakia in Syria on January 7, 2014.<sup>30</sup> The 75<sup>th</sup> Session of the Executive Council will convene in March, 2014. As the June 2014 deadline is fast approaching, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons will continue to play a vital role as the liaison between Syria and the United Nations. Although the OPCW has attained worldwide praise thus far, it surely has no easy task ahead and must continue to exert its pressure as the enforcer of the CWC.

### ***The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons at NMUN•NY 2014***

The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) is the implementing body for the *Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction* otherwise known as the *Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)*, which was adopted by the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva on 3 September 1992.<sup>31</sup> At NMUN•NY 2014, we are simulating the **Conference of the States Parties** of OPCW.

**Format:** The Conference of the States Parties of OPCW is a report writing committee.

**Voting:** Each Member State present may vote once on procedural and substantive matters. While questions of procedure are taken by a simple majority of the Members present and voting, decisions on matters of substance are taken by consensus.<sup>32</sup>

**Membership:** The Conference of the States Parties of OPCW consists of all 190 States whom are party to the *Chemical Weapons Convention (1992)*.

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*This link contains the full report of the Eighteen Conference of State Parties. This session was especially relevant because of the recent Third Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention that delineated the future actions of the OPCW. Additionally, past year events occurred in the Syrian Arab Republic following its accession to the Convention were factors that made this conference of significant importance. Other issues on verification and implementation of the CWC's obligations by Member States can be found on the document.*

Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Executive Council. (2013, October 11). *Report of the Seventy-Fourth Session of the Executive Council (EC-74/5)*. Retrieved 6 January 2014 from: [http://www.opcw.org/index.php?eID=dam\\_frontend\\_push&docID=16816](http://www.opcw.org/index.php?eID=dam_frontend_push&docID=16816)

*The eleven-page report of the Seventy-Fourth Session of the Executive Council which took place on October 8, 2013, is a comprehensive document which details important programs in follow up to the Third Review Conference. In particular, Agenda Item 6, Sub-item 6(i) describes the International Support Network for Victims of Chemical Weapons. The OPCW Programme for Africa is also offered as a future initiative of the OPCW. The report acts as a decent reference point for primary documents, which can be used in further research. Interestingly, at the time of this meeting, Syria was not a party to the OPCW but was nevertheless invited to attend.*

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<sup>29</sup> OPCW, *Thirty Seventh Meeting, Statement by the Director-General to the Executive Council at its Thirty-Seventh Meeting*, 2014.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Executive Council, Thirty Seventh Meeting. (2013, October 25). *Progress in the Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme*. Retrieved 8 January 2014 from: [http://www.opcw.org/index.php?eID=dam\\_frontend\\_push&docID=16847](http://www.opcw.org/index.php?eID=dam_frontend_push&docID=16847)

*The Note by the Director-General on the Progress in the Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme is a follow up to the Thirty-Third Meeting of September 27, 2013. This document provides a practical overview of the Syrian conflict as it pertains to chemical weapons destruction. It describes each and every achievement Syria has established thus far and offers a synopsis of critical frameworks such as UN Security Council Resolution 2118 and the OPCW-UN Joint Mission in Syria. The note can be useful in trying to gain a precise but speedy review of the operation.*

Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Executive Council, Thirty Seventh Meeting. (2014, January 8). *Statement by the Director-General to the Executive Council at its Thirty-Seventh Meeting*. Retrieved 8 February 2014 from: [http://www.opcw.org/index.php?eID=dam\\_frontend\\_push&docID=17060](http://www.opcw.org/index.php?eID=dam_frontend_push&docID=17060)

*This document is of particular importance since it simplifies all the policy agenda of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons towards the recent outcomes on Syria. It also presents relevant source of information on transportation of chemicals involving other Member States such as the United States of America, People's Republic of China, Denmark, and the Russian Federation. Finally, the Director-General presents the development on the Syria Trust Fund for the Destruction of Chemical Weapons.*

Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, (2013, December 10). *Speech by Director-General OPCW Ahmet Üzümcü on Working Together for a World Free of Chemical Weapons and Beyond 2013 Nobel Peace Prize Lecture at Oslo City Hall*. Retrieved 7 January 2014 from:

[http://www.opcw.org/fileadmin/OPCW/Nobel/OPCW\\_Nobel\\_Lecture.pdf](http://www.opcw.org/fileadmin/OPCW/Nobel/OPCW_Nobel_Lecture.pdf)

*The speech delivered by the Director-General during the Nobel Price Lecture is of significant relevance since it explains all the efforts taken by the organization in the field of destruction of stockpiles, non-proliferation. The honorable Director-General also emphasizes the fact that never in history the OPCW activities have been such effective during a civil war. Universality and awareness-rising is also in the top priorities of the OPCW.*

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## I. Ensuring the Universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention

*“We must do everything we can to prevent the chemical genie from coming back out of its bottle; as long as chemical weapons exist, there remains a risk that they will be used.”*<sup>33</sup>

### **Recent Activities**

The Seventy-Fourth Session of the Executive Council was held from 8-11 October 2013. On its official Report, the Council applauded the accession of the Syrian Arab Republic.<sup>34</sup> The Convention entered into force for this Member State on October 14, 2013.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, the body called upon all States that are not Party to the Convention to sign and ratify the CWC without delay or precondition.<sup>36</sup> On his 2013 Nobel Peace Prize lecture, the OPCW Director General, Ahmet Üzümcü, also emphasized universality by stating that “the challenge now is to persuade those six countries still outside the Convention to join it—without delay or conditions.”<sup>37</sup>

From 2-5 December 2013, the Eighteenth Session of the Conference of State Parties (The Conference) was held in The Hague. During these days, 130 out of 190 Member States party attended to the Convention.<sup>38</sup> Additionally, Israel, Angola, and South Sudan attended the meeting in the quality of observers.<sup>39</sup> Additionally, 39 non-governmental organizations, seven international organizations, specialized agencies and international bodies were present in the Eighteen Session.<sup>40</sup> In addition to the accession of the Syrian Arab Republic, The Conference welcomed the accession of Somalia after the deposit of its instrument of accession on 29 May 2013.<sup>41</sup>

### **Universality through Awareness-Raising**

As the OPCW Director General asserted on his lecture for the 2013 Nobel Peace Prize, true universality can be secured by rising awareness of the goals of the CWC.<sup>42</sup> During the last months of 2013, the third meeting of the Scientific Advisory Board’s Temporary Working Group on Education and Outreach in Science and Technology was held in pursuit of true universality.<sup>43</sup> This group consists of 13 international experts on the CWC and chemistry education.<sup>44</sup> The Working Group advised that outreach and awareness regarding the CWC should be achieved by disseminating a culture of “responsible science” among chemistry professionals and practitioners in related fields.<sup>45</sup> With the pursuit to expand the scope of awareness on the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Working Group objective is to increase the level of awareness among scientific and academic communities, to develop more educational and training materials, to provide assistance to National Authorities, and to build relationships with other “national, regional and international actors.”<sup>46</sup> To this end, the OPCW has engaged with regional organizations in order to communicate through additional forums and associated networks.<sup>47</sup> This activity is central for complying

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<sup>33</sup> UN Secretary General, *Everything Must be Done to “Prevent Chemical Genie from Coming Back out of its Bottle, Secretary-General Says in Message to State Parties’ Conference*, 2013.

<sup>34</sup> OPCW Executive Council, *Report of the Seventy-Fourth Session of the Executive Council*, 2013, para. 6. 29.

<sup>35</sup> OPCW Director General, *Annual Report on the Implementation of the Action Plan for the Universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention during the Period from 16 August 2012 to 15 September 2013*, 2013; OPCW Technical Secretariat, *Note by the Technical Secretariat: Status of Participation in the Chemical Weapons Convention as at 14 October 2013*, 2013.

<sup>36</sup> OPCW Executive Council, *Report of the Seventy-Fourth Session of the Executive Council*, 2013, para. 6. 29.

<sup>37</sup> Üzümcü, *Working Together for a World Free of Chemical Weapons, and Beyond*, 2013, p. 8.

<sup>38</sup> OPCW Conference of State Parties, *Report of the Eighteenth Session of the Conference of the State Parties*, 2013, paras. 1.4-1.5.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, paras. 1.6-1.7.

<sup>41</sup> OPCW, *Somalia Joins the Chemical Weapons Convention*, 2013.

<sup>42</sup> Üzümcü, *Working Together for a World Free of Chemical Weapons, and Beyond*, 2013, p. 11.

<sup>43</sup> OPCW, *Report of the Third Meeting of the Scientific Advisory Board’s Temporary Group on Education and Outreach in Science and Technology Relevant to the Chemical Weapons Convention*, 2014; Benachour and Feakes, *Education, Outreach and Awareness-Raising After the Third Review Conference*, 2013, p. 12.

<sup>44</sup> Benachour and Feakes, *Education, Outreach and Awareness-Raising after the Third Review Conference*, 2013, p. 12.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> OPCW, *Report of the Third Meeting of the Scientific Advisory Board’s Temporary Group on Education and Outreach in Science and Technology Relevant to the Chemical Weapons Convention*, 2014, p.7.

<sup>47</sup> Üzümcü, *Working Together for a World Free of Chemical Weapons, and Beyond*, 2013, p. 11.

with the mandate imposed by the Third Review Conference of the CWC to undertake activities in the fields of education, outreach and awareness.<sup>48</sup>

In cooperation with the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC), the OPCW launched a project focused on creating an interactive website called “Multiple Uses of Chemicals.”<sup>49</sup> The initiative is destined for students, educators, professionals and policy makers regarding responsible use of chemicals.<sup>50</sup> This website offers an interactive explanation of basic obligations of the CWC, presents case studies regarding dual use of chemistry, and also simulates ordinary situations that people might face on their daily basis regarding the temptation to use chemistry for illicit purposes.<sup>51</sup> With available material on six official languages, more than 25,000 visitors over 80 countries accessed the site in the period August-December 2013.<sup>52</sup> As of 2 December 2013, three out of the four phases of the project were successfully completed. The fourth phase will conclude at a workshop held at the 5th IUPAC Conference on Green Chemistry in South Africa in 2014 by using the material with chemistry educators.<sup>53</sup>

### ***Case Study: Argentine Project on Education and Chemical Weapons Convention***

During the Eighteenth Conference of State Parties, the Republic of Argentina (Argentina) presented its report on “The Argentine Project on Education and the Chemical Weapons Convention.”<sup>54</sup> This is an initiative supported by the OPCW for the implementation of the Temporary Group on Education and Outreach of the OPCW Scientific Advisory Board.<sup>55</sup> Argentina designed the project to promote “a culture among all professionals in the chemical fields, on the responsible use of technical and scientific knowledge, in order to be aware of the potential danger and to prevent all misuse and abuse of chemicals.”<sup>56</sup> Officials recognized the need for such a project after the national authority found that the Argentinian industrial personnel, managers and senior Staff had an incorrect or incomplete understanding of the obligations under the CWC or the national implementation regulations.<sup>57</sup> The same finding was observed in the Argentinean university system. While the curricular content was strong in terms of chemistry, there was a lack of efforts regarding CWC’s obligations and their national implementation regulations. Although young professionals were adept in terms of scientific and technical knowledge, there was a lack of “understanding of the dual nature of the use of knowledge in the chemical sciences and of the risks involved”.<sup>58</sup>

Within this scenario, the Argentine National Authority started a program with the objective of establishing a network of universities to help these institutions on the implementation of relevant course material to cover the CWC obligations.<sup>59</sup> Additionally, it started a *training the trainers* program for faculty members and professors, accompanied by the implementation of a model virtual classroom for those institutions lacking trained personnel.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, outreach seminars and meetings were also held with representatives of related industries.<sup>61</sup> Finally, the project is complemented by the organization of forums and workshops throughout the country.<sup>62</sup> The participation of the OPCW has been relevant since the first *training the trainer* workshop was counted with international experts.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Benachour and Feakes, Education, *Outreach and Awareness-Raising After the Third Review Conference*, 2013, p. 12.

<sup>49</sup> Hay and Mahaffy, *Multiple Uses of Chemicals: Choices for Chemists and the Public*, 2013, p. 23.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry, *Project Details: Updating, Piloting, and Disseminating Educational Material for Raising Awareness of the Multiple Uses of Chemicals and the Chemical Weapons Convention*, 2013.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> OPCW, Conference of the State Parties, Argentina, *The Argentine Project on Education and the Chemical Weapons Convention*, 2013.

<sup>55</sup> Zlauvinen, *The Argentine Project on Education and the CWC*, 2013, p. 15.

<sup>56</sup> OPCW, *Conference of the State Parties, Argentina, The Argentine Project on Education and the Chemical Weapons Convention*, 2013, p. 4.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Zlauvinen, *The Argentine Project on Education and the CWC*, 2013, p. 15.

<sup>62</sup> OPCW, *Conference of the State Parties, Argentina, The Argentine Project on Education and the Chemical Weapons Convention*, 2013, p. 5.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

Finally, the organization's Secretariat has compromised its assistance in the organization of the First Regional Meeting on Education and Outreach that will be held in Buenos Aires in April 2014.<sup>64</sup>

After three years of implementation, the project has proved to be successful. In effect, the number of registered companies that submits annual declarations of their activity information regarding the use of chemicals has increased by 215 percent, while the number of registered companies increased by 485%.<sup>65</sup> While the results on the field of education in universities are not ready to be published, the national authority will release a report by the end of 2014.<sup>66</sup> The evaluation of results will use indicators such as the number of graduate careers that have incorporated courses or modules for the achievement of the project; the number of universities that have organized workshops and seminars; the number of professors that have been trained; the number of students that have participated in virtual classes, workshops, seminars and conferences.<sup>67</sup>

### Annotated Bibliography

International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry and Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. (2013). *Raising Awareness: Multiple Choices of Chemicals*. Retrieved 6 January 2014 from: <http://multiple.kevs.ca/site/index.html#>

*This website is a valuable source of information regarding outreach and education on the CWC. In fact, this is the result of a project carried out by both the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry and the OPCW. This website contains interactive materials directed to students, educators and policy makers, including information on the dual use of chemistry and the responsibility that practitioners must have in the performance of their duties. Moreover, delegates will find practical information in case studies developed with real solutions adopted in the past on different scenarios.*

Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. (2013). *OPCW Today*. 2(5): 1-40. Retrieved 4 January 2014, from: [http://www.opcw.org/fileadmin/OPCW/OPCW\\_Today/OPCW\\_Today\\_-\\_Vol\\_2\\_No\\_5.pdf](http://www.opcw.org/fileadmin/OPCW/OPCW_Today/OPCW_Today_-_Vol_2_No_5.pdf)

*The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons officially publishes OPCW Today one to three times each year. The last publication was issued on December 2013. This journal contains several articles relating the advances made by the OPCW during 2013. It especially contains information related to the 2013 Nobel Peace Prize, education and outreach and a series of case studies. This document is important for delegates as it contains practical information on the implementation of policies regarding universality.*

Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Conference of the State Parties, Argentina, Eighteenth Session. (2013, December 2). *The Argentine Project on Education and the Chemical Weapons Convention (C-18/NAT.3)*. Retrieved 9 January 2014 from:

[http://www.opcw.org/index.php?eID=dam\\_frontend\\_push&docID=16910](http://www.opcw.org/index.php?eID=dam_frontend_push&docID=16910)

*This document contains the full report prepared by the Argentinean National Authority for the Eighteenth Session of the Conference of State Parties. The report fully explains the key issues of the project on education an outreach of the CWC. It additionally presents partial results and future objectives that the project's Working Group has set for its accomplishment of its goals in 2014.*

Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Technical Secretariat. (2013, October 14). *Note by the Technical Secretariat: Status of Participation in the Chemical Weapons Convention as at 14 October 2013 (S/1131/2013)*. Retrieved 9 January 2014 from:

[http://www.opcw.org/index.php?eID=dam\\_frontend\\_push&docID=16815](http://www.opcw.org/index.php?eID=dam_frontend_push&docID=16815)

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<sup>64</sup> OPCW, Conference of the State Parties, Argentina, *The Argentine Project on Education and the Chemical Weapons Convention*, 2013, p. 8.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>66</sup> Zlauvinen, *The Argentine Project on Education and the CWC*, 2013, p. 17.

<sup>67</sup> OPCW, Conference of the State Parties, Argentina, *The Argentine Project on Education and the Chemical Weapons Convention*, 2013, p. 7.

*This document is of special relevance for all delegations searching their status regarding the Chemical Weapons Convention. The charts introduced in this document contain the dates of signature, ratification, and entry into force of the CWC for each of the Member States. Delegates can also find the status of those states that have not ratified the Convention.*

Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Conference of State Parties. Eighteenth Session. (2013, December 5). *Report of the Eighteenth Session of the Conference of the State Parties* (C-18/5, 2013). Retrieved 4 January 2014 from: [http://www.opcw.org/index.php?eID=dam\\_frontend\\_push&docID=16961](http://www.opcw.org/index.php?eID=dam_frontend_push&docID=16961)

*This link contains the full report of the Eighteen Conference of State Parties. This session was especially relevant because of the recent Third Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention that delineated the future actions of the OPCW. Additionally, past year events occurred in the Syrian Arab Republic following its accession to the Convention were factors that made this conference of significant importance. Other issues on verification and implementation of the CWC's obligations by Member States can be found on the document.*

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## II. Addressing Chemical Weapons Safety in Political Transitions

### *Introduction*

The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has made significant international progress in the verification, management and elimination of chemical weapons stockpiles, evident by the destruction of 80.69% of the world's stockpile of chemical agent to date.<sup>68</sup> However, efforts to eliminate stockpiles completely are ongoing in Iraq, the Russian Federation, Libya, the United States of America and most recently, in the Syrian Arab Republic, which marks the OPCW's very first operation in a war zone.<sup>69</sup>

Political transition amidst civil war has the potential to meaningfully interrupt efforts in the disarmament process, as was seen in Libya when the process was stalled due to internal conflict.<sup>70</sup> Likewise, the operation in Syria has proven to be a challenge as it has hit a few speed bumps due to missed deadlines, problems with access to sites, security threats and political fall-out.<sup>71</sup> It is important to note that despite civil conflict and difficulty with formation of a new government, the OPCW's operation in Libya can serve as example of a successful disarmament program because as of 26 January 2014, Libya has fulfilled its destruction of Category 1 chemical weapons.<sup>72</sup>

In the past, political transition has been more of a private, state-based nature—exclusive process rather than inclusive—in an effort to preserve state sovereignty.<sup>73</sup> Modern rationale, however, is moving toward an inclusive approach in which multilateral agreements and negotiators outside the given Member State help facilitate meaningful dialogue and movement toward non-conflict resolutions.<sup>74</sup> This trend has allowed the OPCW, along with support from the international community, to be proactive in chemical non-proliferation and disarmament missions.

### *Recent Activity*

In follow up to the Third Review Conference, the OPCW has focused on the importance of capacity building during political transitions, emergency response and the prevention of future proliferation.<sup>75</sup> In particular, the OPCW's newest issue of *OPCW Today*, which was released in December 2013, offers details on changing practices through the establishment of new codes of conduct in an effort to focus on supporting a culture of social responsibility.<sup>76</sup> The issue targets the chemical industry's current safety procedures and states that “codes can be utilized to establish a security culture that gives a moral impetus for all employees, not just security guards, to, for example, lock storage areas containing chemicals or equipment that could be exploited by others to kill, injure or terrorize.”<sup>77</sup>

Furthermore, the OPCW recently co-sponsored the Third International Course on Assistance and Protection Against Chemical Weapons.<sup>78</sup> Participants were trained in chemical-emergency response tactics and decontamination techniques used during chemical warfare assaults.<sup>79</sup> Additionally, OPCW Director-General Ahmet Uzumcu, invited Latin American and Caribbean Member States to follow suit with a regional workshop of their own, and to focus on emergency response and protection of civilian populations.<sup>80</sup>

Given the influx of international pledges to assist in the Syrian operation, the Director General has invited Eastern European Member States to participate in a training course on the transfer of chemical weapons, due to take place in

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<sup>68</sup> OPCW, *Media Corner: Mission-Updates*.

<sup>69</sup> BBC News, *Profile: Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons*, 2013.

<sup>70</sup> OPCW, *Libya Completes Destruction of its Category 1 Chemical Weapons*, 2014.

<sup>71</sup> Fox News, *Despite Obstacles, Experts Say Syria's Chemical Weapons Threat Can be Neutralized in Weeks*, 2013.

<sup>72</sup> OPCW, *Libya Completes Destruction of its Category 1 Chemical Weapons*, 2014.

<sup>73</sup> International Civil Society Action Network, et. al., *Building More Inclusive Political Transitions*, 2013.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Gluck, *How Codes of Practice Enhance a Chemical Security Culture*, 2013.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> OPCW, *Third International Course on Assistance and Protection Against Chemical Weapons Held in Islamabad*, Pakistan, 2013.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> OPCW, *Call for Nominations for a Regional Workshop on Assistance and Protection Under Article X of the Chemical Weapons Convention and Issues of Regional Coordination*, 2013.

late March of 2014.<sup>81</sup> The purpose of this training course is offer customs officers the skills needed in regards to the safe and effective transportation of chemical weapons over state boundaries.<sup>82</sup> Similarly, an identical training course has been pitched to African Member States as well.<sup>83</sup>

### ***Policy Implementation***

Much of OPCW's recent efforts have been aimed at the Syrian disarmament operation. The escalation of the two-and-a-half year conflict in Syria has stirred up international debate and, furthermore, has caused serious concerns about instability in the Middle Eastern region. The efforts thus far have been a product of extraordinary diplomacy reflected by individual Member States such as the Russian Federation and the United States of America.<sup>84</sup> With the mobilization of the United Nations Security Council and the OPCW-UN Joint Mission, as well as the mounting pressure from the international community, Syria has begun the removal of its chemical weapons.<sup>85</sup> International allegiance to the OPCW's mission in Syria has played an essential role in the safe transportation of Syria's chemical weapons. The OPCW approved a plan in late December to properly dispose of the chemical weapons with regional support from Member States in the European Union and additional help from other actors such as the People's Republic of China.<sup>86</sup> Given the ongoing civil war and its precarious political environment, safe and total disposal promises to be complex and difficult.<sup>87</sup>

Pursuant to Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) and backed by the United Nations Security Council, the OPCW entered Syria on 1 October 2013 to establish operations.<sup>88</sup> As a result, the OPCW-UN Joint Mission has successfully secured and disabled the Syrian production facilities and weapons that fall under the CWC's Category 3.<sup>89</sup> The OPCW's latest efforts in Syria took place on 7 January 2014, with the removal of the first chemical material from Latakia, a major port on Syria's west coast.<sup>90</sup> Although the OPCW experienced initial delays in its removal efforts due to "security concerns" within the war-torn country, Syria is expected to meet its June 2014 deadline for removal of all chemical weapons material.<sup>91</sup> Despite these assurances, the Director-General has made a statement to OPCW Executive Council, urging the removal process to be speedy.<sup>92</sup> To date, the United States, Germany and Italy have all pledged their support in the transportation and destruction of Syria's chemical stockpile through a process known as hydrolysis which is being credited as an environmentally safe and secure way to dispose of the material.<sup>93</sup> Russian and Chinese vessels will assist by escorting ships loaded with Syria's chemical weapons to ensure a safe transportation.<sup>94</sup>

### ***Conclusion***

To ensure progress toward a successful political transition in Syria and in all other Member States that have yet to either ratify the CWC or complete their disarmament programs, evidence shows that support on a multinational level is crucial. It is to be determined if Syria will complete its process by the June 2014 deadline. The progress made thus far has been promising and could contribute to other Member State's successions to the treaty. Moreover, if Syria achieves their 2014 deadline, then pressure could increase on Libya to follow suit. On the other hand, the success of the disarmament process is highly dependent on the cooperation and commitment rather than the sabotage of all parties involved. These factors will undoubtedly influence Syria's post-destruction plan.

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<sup>81</sup> OPCW, *Regional Training Course for Customs Authorities of the States Parties in Eastern Europe on the Technical Aspects of the Transfers Regime of the Chemical Weapons Convention*, 2014.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>84</sup> Valiente, *Russia Calls on USA to Communicate With All Sides in Syria, Except Terrorists*, 2014.

<sup>85</sup> BBC News, *Syria Chemical Weapons: First Consignment Leave Latakia*, 2014.

<sup>86</sup> Bruce, *Chemical Weapons Agency Unveils Plan for Destroying Syria's Stockpile*, 2013.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> OPCW-UN, *OPCW-UN Team Arrive in Damascus and Sets Up Operational Base*, 2013.

<sup>89</sup> OPCW-UN, *UN Secretary-General Speaks at the Security Council on the Investigating Team's Final Report on 16 December 2013*, 2013.

<sup>90</sup> BBC News, *Syria Chemical Weapons: First Consignment Leave Latakia*, 2014.

<sup>91</sup> UN Department for Public Information, *Security Council Expects Syria to Meet June Deadline for Chemical Weapons Removal, Official Says* [Article], 2014.

<sup>92</sup> OPCW, *Director General: Need to "Pick up the Pace" in Removing Chemicals from Syria*, 2014.

<sup>93</sup> OPCW, *Statements and Press Releases*, 2014.

<sup>94</sup> RT, *Russian, Chinese Warships to Secure Marine Transfer of Syria's Chemicals*, 2014.

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*The New York Times article offers a comprehensive overview of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapon's destruction plan of Syrian chemical weapons. The article discusses the multinational efforts at play and provides a synopsis of each tactical role per Member State. The article is helpful in the understanding of potential risks in the transportation of the weapons with an emphasis on the current political government within Syria.*

Fitzgerald, D. (2013). *Libya Case Provides Lessons for OPCW Inspectors in Syria*. Retrieved 5 January 2014 from: <http://untribune.com/post/63754573255/libya-case-provides-lessons-for-opcw-inspectors-in>

*This UN Tribune article draws parallels between the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapon's efforts in Libya and the current process underway in Syria. The article purposefully points out the timeline of Libya's destruction process and its failure to have met the deadline. It also calls into question the June 2014 deadline that Syria must meet and the potential effects associated with failing to meet these requirements.*

Gluck, A. C. (2013). How Codes of Practice Enhance a Chemical Security Culture. *OPCW Today*. 2(5): 18-21. Retrieved 5 January 2014 from: [http://www.opcw.org/fileadmin/OPCW/OPCW\\_Today/OPCW\\_Today\\_-\\_Vol\\_2\\_No\\_5.pdf](http://www.opcw.org/fileadmin/OPCW/OPCW_Today/OPCW_Today_-_Vol_2_No_5.pdf)

*The OPCW newsletter entitled OPCW Today, offers a variety of examples of the mechanisms in place to implement international educational outreach programs. The newsletter details case studies of each outreach program the OPCW is currently involved in and specifies the objectives of each mission. More importantly, the newsletter highlights the OPCW's objective of promoting stability in politically unstable communities through initiatives that focus on knowledge, training, and research, and develop through institutional programs and curriculum.*

Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and United Nations Joint Mission for the Elimination of the Chemical Weapons Programme of the Syrian Arab Republic. (2013). *UN Secretary-General Speaks at the Security Council on the Investigative Team's Final Report*. Retrieved 5 January 2014 January from: <http://opcw.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?ctl=Details&tabid=6576&mid=10358&ItemID=11064>

*Remarks from UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon offer a brief but concise review of the findings from the August attack in Ghouta and other locations within Syria. This report names multiple key resolutions and organizations that have played a role in eliminating Syria's chemical weapons. It also calls attention to the current humanitarian situations within Syria's borders and urges all Member States to provide aid.*

United Nations, Department for Public Information. (2014). *Security Council Expects Syria to Meet June Deadline for Chemical Weapons Removal, Official Says* [Article]. Retrieved 6 January 2014 from: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=46888>

*This article, which is published by the UN Department for Public Information, discusses Syria's June 2014 deadline, a date that is extremely influential within the international community, the OPCW and its reputation. The article highlights recent developments in the Syrian disarmament process, which indicate that the OPCW has thus far been successful in tackling the high-profile situation in the Middle East. It also points out security concerns such as the ongoing civil war, the transportation of equipment across numerous borders and the complexity behind the transition as a whole.*

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