

# **ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS**

## **Contribution to the Report of the Secretary-General to the 81st Session of the UN General Assembly on the Implementation of the Recommendations of the 2002 UN Study on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education**

### **Executive Summary**

Over the reporting period, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) made significant contributions to disarmament and non-proliferation education. To strengthen implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention” or “CWC”), OPCW engaged with its Member States and other stakeholders through various educational initiatives around the world, including at the Centre for Chemistry and Technology (ChemTech Centre), which was inaugurated in May 2023, and is now an invaluable platform for OPCW technical work and training programmes.

OPCW’s digital and in-person engagements were extensive. Its website and social media platforms substantially increased their reach. E-learning offerings of the Secretariat were enhanced, including new online resources to increase capacity-building. OPCW also expanded its outreach visits programme significantly, adapting the format to accommodate an increased number of visitors.

Collaborations with academic institutions and other organisations led to delivery of educational programmes and workshops, raising awareness and building capacity, with a continued focus on increasing the participation of women in capacity building efforts. This period saw the delivery of the first joint training activity with the Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit (BWC ISU).

Engagement with scientists and academic institutions enabled the Organisation to keep pace with technological developments, promote responsible science, and address emerging issues such as artificial intelligence (AI) and chemical forensics, notably through the work of the Scientific Advisory Board and its temporary working groups. OPCW focused a number of training and capacity building efforts on the field of emerging technologies and AI over the reporting period, reflecting the increased importance of these areas.

### **Full report**

#### Introduction

1. Education and outreach (E&O) are important tools employed by the OPCW to engage with its Member States and various stakeholders at international, regional, and local levels on the core obligations of the CWC. Recognised by the Third CWC Review Conference (2013) as essential for supporting “the Convention’s role as a bulwark against chemical weapons,” E&O improves the OPCW’s interaction with stakeholders such as the chemical industry, the scientific community, academia, and civil society

organisations, thereby strengthening national implementation of the Convention. Accordingly, the OPCW Member States and the OPCW Technical Secretariat share joint responsibilities in this area.

#### Outreach to the general public

2. The OPCW official website, ([www.opcw.org](http://www.opcw.org)) is the OPCW's primary online platform, playing a crucial role in communicating its missions and messages to target audiences around the globe. The website also makes available a range of education and outreach resources. The website was visited by approximately 480,000 users per year in 2024 and 2025.
3. In addition, the OPCW maintains several official social media accounts, including X (formerly known as 'Twitter'), Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube. During the reporting period, follower counts increased steadily across all platforms, with a combined annual growth rate of 8% in 2024 and 10.7% in 2025.
4. In 2024, OPCW completed the translation of six OPCW Basics videos into Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian, and Spanish. The videos are featured on the OPCW website for streaming and download, as well as on the OPCW YouTube channel. They have been used in digital outreach and OPCW capacity-building activities and are freely utilised by OPCW stakeholders worldwide as outreach tools, significantly expanding the geographic reach of the content.
5. OPCW offers both in-person and virtual group visits to its headquarters targeting a wide range of audiences, including students, legal scholars and judges, diplomats, government officials, and security professionals. The free one-hour visits, which include a presentation and a tour, are designed to educate the participants as well as to make the CWC relevant to them whatever their background. During the reporting period, in-person and virtual visits continued to expand, reflecting strengthened public engagement. In 2024, the Secretariat organised 84 outreach events through the OPCW Group Visits Programme, reaching a total of 2,197 participants. In response to the increased visiting demands, the Friday Visits Programme was launched in 2024 as a new initiative to host multiple groups simultaneously. The programme received an overwhelming welcome from public audiences. In 2025, the Secretariat organised 95 outreach events through the OPCW Group Visits Programme, reaching a total of 3,293 participants from all regions (50% increase on 2024).
6. OPCW also continued its collaboration with the T.M.C. Asser Institute on their annual programme on 'Disarmament and Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction', which took place in October 2024 and 2025. During this programme, early- to mid-career professionals increase their knowledge about the diplomatic, legal, and technical aspects of disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and have an opportunity to engage with OPCW experts, including at the OPCW ChemTech Centre.
7. To engage the citizens of the OPCW's host country, the Netherlands, the OPCW participated in The Hague International Open Day on 22 September 2024 and 21 September 2025, hosting hundreds of members of the public and delegations for presentations, demonstrations, and interactive exhibitions about the CWC, the OPCW, and the science that underpins it. The Organisation also hosted OPCW exhibition booths

at the EU Open Day in Brussels and at the CBRNe High Intensity Conference in Poznań, Poland, showcasing the importance of the CWC and the OPCW's work to thousands of visitors through engaging and interactive formats.

8. Following on from the Fifth Review Conference, the States Parties conducted a year long process of informal open-ended consultations on the topics related to civil society engagement. This process considered current practices and options to broaden engagement with civil society, and culminated in a report at the Twenty-Ninth Session of the Conference in 2024. Respective recommendations, including improving the process of accreditation of NGOs to the sessions of the Conference, were set out in its final report.
9. Youth continued to be a key target group for engagement. Throughout 2024 and 2025, initiatives targeting young people were steadily implemented, reflecting sustained efforts to strengthen outreach and participation among this group.
10. In April 2025, the OPCW contributed to the 101st International Session of the European Youth Parliament in The Hague, held under the theme "Young visions of Peace and Security." The OPCW supported a committee on preventing the proliferation of chemical weapons and facilitated expert engagement with participants through briefings and a visit to the OPCW Headquarters. The initiative provided young delegates with greater understanding of the CWC, verification mechanisms, and the risks posed by emerging technologies, and resulted in the adoption of a resolution relevant to international efforts to prevent chemical weapons proliferation.
11. During the Thirtieth Session of the Conference of the States Parties, the Technical Secretariat supported a youth-focused Peace Circle side event in cooperation with youth-led networks and civil society partners. The initiative brought together students, young professionals, and experts for an intergenerational discussion on disarmament, responsible science, accountability, and the prevention of the re-emergence of chemical weapons. The event contributed to strengthening dialogue between the OPCW, youth, and civil society stakeholders on the continued implementation of the Convention, and was very positively received by States Parties and civil society participants.
12. From 9 to 13 February 2026, the OPCW partnered with the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA) to support its first simulation within the World Model United Nations (WIMUN) framework in New York. A total of 58 students from 19 countries participated in the simulation, representing States Parties from all regional groups. OPCW staff contributed study materials and procedural guidance reflecting the Organisation's policy-making processes, enabling participants to develop a practical understanding of multilateral diplomacy, consensus-building, and the technical and political dimensions of chemical disarmament.

#### Advisory Board on Education and Outreach (ABEO)

13. The OPCW Advisory Board on Education and Outreach (ABEO) continued to advance work to strengthen the implementation of the CWC through education and advice on enhanced youth engagement, aimed at promoting chemical disarmament and the work of the Organisation. The Board also focused on issues related to AI, in particular its ethical dimensions and its potential use in promoting the peaceful uses of chemistry

through education. The Board further recommended the establishment of a Global Academic Network to support OPCW's work and strengthen a culture of responsible knowledge across all regions. Raising awareness of the importance of the Convention and of the OPCW's mission to achieve a world free of chemical weapons remains a core activity of ABEO members.

#### Outreach to chemical industry

14. The chemical industry is a key stakeholder in the CWC's implementation. Throughout the reporting period, the Technical Secretariat facilitated dialogue between the National Authorities of OPCW Member States and the chemical industry by organising the Annual Meetings of National Authorities and Chemical Industry and holding regular consultations with the International Council of Chemical Associations (ICCA) and International Chemical Trade Association (ICTA). Industry representatives were also invited to contribute to selected OPCW international cooperation programmes, sharing expertise on the safe and secure management of chemicals, which enriched the OPCW capacity-building activities and supported the development of practical tools such as voluntary guidelines for National Authorities.
15. Chemical industry associations contribute significantly to OPCW capacity-building activities through their involvement in the OPCW Associate Programme, the Organisation's flagship professional development initiative since 2000. This programme promotes a culture of safety and best practices in chemical industries among OPCW Member States. During the 2024 and 2025 editions, 28 industrial plant facilities from 17 OPCW Member States hosted and trained 60 participants. OPCW Member States and ICCA provided support in identifying facilities willing to take part in the industry component of the Programme.

#### Outreach to the scientific community and academia

16. Effective implementation of the CWC requires active engagement with scientific professionals, constant review of the evolving technological landscape, and an understanding of new scientific developments. The Technical Secretariat continued to foster collaboration and engagement across scientific communities. Conference attendance, the partnership with the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC), and publications in scientific literature have enhanced the Technical Secretariat's ability to stay abreast of developments in chemistry, maintain its visibility and credibility among scientific communities, promote responsibility and ethics in science, and support education and outreach activities.
17. The Technical Secretariat, along with members of the OPCW Scientific Advisory Board (SAB), maintained a visible presence amongst technical communities, delivering presentations at events and through publications in peer-reviewed scientific journals.
18. Of particular note, the SAB completed two of its ongoing Temporary Working Groups, one on AI and the other on chemical forensics. The final reports can be found on the OPCW SAB website: <https://www.opcw.org/resources/documents/subsidiary-bodies/scientific-advisory-board>.

#### Outreach to OPCW Member States to support education and CWC implementation

19. Education and outreach are crucial to the ongoing implementation of the CWC and the promotion of chemical disarmament and non-proliferation. During the reporting period, the Technical Secretariat engaged in educational and outreach activities through various capacity building programmes. These efforts aimed to enhance the understanding among various stakeholder groups in OPCW Member States about the CWC and its effective implementation, thereby advancing chemical disarmament and non-proliferation.
20. Between June 2024 and May 2026, the Technical Secretariat organised a total of 198 educational and capacity building activities. These included workshops, seminars, forums, symposia, training courses and table-top and field exercises for diverse CWC stakeholders. These included government officials, customs officers, chemical emergency responders, chemical safety and security professionals, and laboratory chemists. Additionally, the Technical Secretariat continued to provide sponsorship for scientific conferences, fellowships, and research projects.
21. To deliver these educational programmes and activities, the OPCW partnered with regional and other international organisations, as well as national agencies, academic institutions, research organisations, and laboratories. Since becoming operational in May 2023, the ChemTech Centre has been increasingly utilised to improve the OPCW's training and education offerings.
22. During the reporting period, several activities also focused on specific audiences, namely women, youth, and scientists. The Technical Secretariat also continued hosting a forum on the peaceful uses of chemistry and developing e-learning tools to increase its educational outreach.
23. The Technical Secretariat organised a symposium on women in chemistry at the ChemTech Centre in March 2025. The symposium highlighted the contribution of women to chemistry, promoted international cooperation, and raised awareness of the opportunities for capacity and knowledge development in chemistry.
24. The Technical Secretariat also continued to provide capacity development opportunities to qualified women in the field of chemical emergency response. This included the international training cycle on assistance and protection for women first responders (2024 – 2025), conducted in collaboration with the Swiss Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Defense School of the Swiss Armed Forces. The cycle provided fundamental training in protection against chemical weapons and included practical training with chemical detection and decontamination equipment. Participants included women first responders from military, police, firefighting, and chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosives (CBRNE) units. It highlighted the necessity of OPCW efforts to address gender-related challenges and needs in chemical emergency preparedness, and expanded opportunities for women in a traditionally male-dominated field.
25. More widely, in the area of chemical emergency response, in 2025, the Technical Secretariat launched a pilot training of trainers for first responders programme, with the support of the Government of Italy. Comprising an online phase, an autonomous learning phase, and two face-to-face workshops, the course supported the continuous professional development of instructors and strengthened sustainable national and regional training capacities in chemical emergency response. Following the online

- learning phase, a face-to-face workshop was held at the ChemTech Centre in November 2025. This workshop provided expert guidance to improve trainers' skills in the design, development, and delivery of basic chemical emergency response training. The first face-to-face workshop was followed by an autonomous learning phase, enabling participants to apply their learning at the national level under the mentorship of course instructors. The second face-to-face workshop to complete the training cycle took place in March 2026.
26. The Technical Secretariat also hosted students pursuing the international master's course on protection against CBRNe events at the University of Rome Tor Vergata in June 2024. This event, which took place at the ChemTech Centre and the OPCW Main Building, provided participants with an overview of various activities of the Technical Secretariat and contributed to enhancing their understanding of the OPCW and the Convention.
  27. To advance the peaceful and secure uses of chemistry, and in an effort to expand the reach of its activities to cover new and emerging technologies, the Technical Secretariat has initiated a series of workshops on the role of AI in the implementation of the CWC. A first workshop, titled "Global Conference on the Role of AI in Advancing the Implementation of Chemical Weapons Convention" was held in Rabat, Morocco, in October 2024, jointly organised with the Kingdom of Morocco, with voluntary contributions from OPCW Member States.
  28. In June 2025, the Secretariat and the Government of the People's Republic of China co-organised a workshop on AI and chemical safety and security management in Shanghai, China. The workshop provided a platform for States Parties to gain an understanding of the impact of AI technologies in the peaceful use of chemistry, promoting participation of States Parties in the global governance on AI, and contributing to the effective implementation of the Convention.
  29. To further strengthen capacity building efforts on emerging technologies, in April 2026 the Technical Secretariat organised the "Seoul Workshop on Peaceful Development and Use of Chemistry for Member States: A Special Edition on the Application of AI in the Chemical Industry". The workshop focused on the application of AI in chemical industry operations, showcasing how AI can be used to strengthen safety and security, while raising awareness about potential threats and risks deriving from malicious actors' misuse of the technology.
  30. The Technical Secretariat, jointly with the UN Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit (BWC ISU) hosted the 2026 edition of the 'Policy and Diplomacy for Scientists' workshop in May 2026, at the ChemTech Centre. This event highlighted the role of science and scientists in disarmament and policy making, promoting responsible research practices in chemical and biochemical sciences. The first event jointly organised with the BWC ISU, the workshop addressed topics of common interest including the dual uses of scientific research, the impact of scientific and technological developments on international security, and the convergence of chemical and biological sciences and potential areas of cooperation, such as biotoxins.
  31. Additionally, the 'Chemical Safety and Security Tools Development Programme' continued to be implemented during the reporting period. On 16 October 2024, the

Technical Secretariat officially released the Indicative Guidelines for the Safe and Secure Transport of Hazardous Chemicals by Road during a hybrid launching event. The third phase of the programme also started, with the objective of developing the Indicative Guidelines on Know your Customer (KYC) for the Chemical Supply Chain, through two in-person workshops (in Colombo, Sri Lanka in February 2024 and in Nairobi, Kenya in February 2025). An on-line workshop was hosted in December 2025 to review the draft version of the Indicative Guidelines on KYC, attended by a wide group of experts nominated by States Parties.

32. The Technical Secretariat further expanded and modernised its remote educational resources and made its virtual learning platform more robust and inclusive. Targeted collaboration with relevant partners (WCO, UNODA, DTRA) resulted in the joint development of learning resources for the disarmament and non-proliferation community. Through this approach, critical knowledge about the implementation of the CWC is disseminated in a cost-effective manner to the relevant audience in OPCW Member States, thereby complementing capacity-development activities conducted in-person.
33. OPCW's 'Science for Diplomats' events have continued, providing an informal and interactive forum for OPCW (and affiliated) scientists to engage with representatives from OPCW Member States on a range of scientific themes. They aim to enhance participants' understanding of key scientific and technological issues relevant to the CWC through presentations, hands-on activities, demonstrations, and question-and-answer sessions. This encourages open and productive dialogue between scientists and diplomats. During the reporting period, four events took place, focusing on AI, personal protective equipment, and chemical weapons destruction.
34. Throughout the reporting period the Technical Secretariat continued to promote and advance networking and exchange among the scientific community and academic institutions through the Fellowship Programme. The Programme has the objective of facilitating the exchange of scientific and technical information, while at the same time strengthening institutions in the target countries through capacity building.
35. In addition, under the OPCW Fellowship Programme a new research fellowship for African States parties on biotoxins analysis was launched in 2026 and is currently hosted at the ChemTech Centre, enabled by the generous funding from States Parties.

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