

Role of education and outreach in the prevention of the re-emergence of chemical weapons

For consideration by the Open-Ended Working Group preparing the Fourth Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention at its ninth meeting

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The Advisory Board on Education and Outreach (ABEO) is a subsidiary organ of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Its members, together and individually, represent a wide range of education and outreach (E&O) expertise and experience. Besides strategic and practical advice to the OPCW and its Technical Secretariat, ABEO Members can assist with the design, development and assessment of educational strategies, materials and tools for the international organisation or National Authorities, as well as contribute actively to E&O activities.

Education and outreach, including public diplomacy, are increasingly important tools employed by the OPCW to engage with States Parties and with a wide variety of stakeholder communities on the international, regional and local levels. The three principal approaches are:

- ***Outreach*** maximises awareness of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the core obligations in Article I of the Convention, and the policies and processes in pursuit of the prevention of the re-emergence of chemical weapons.
- ***Education*** deepens the understanding of policy processes and challenges posed by scientific and technological developments, as well as by the dual-use potential of many activities, processes, and products. Education also assists the Technical Secretariat, States Parties (in particular through their National Authorities) and stakeholder communities to better communicate and engage with their respective target audiences and membership.
- An integrated ***Public Diplomacy Strategy*** supports the systematic communication with multiple audiences around the world and offers opportunities of targeted engagement with them via diverse communication tools whenever specific opportunities to promote the goals and operation of the OPCW present themselves.

The stakeholder communities can be both targets of E&O or partners in the design and implementation of E&O activities. Among the principal stakeholders are members of the academic, scientific and professional communities and associations, as well as the chemical industry. The various Divisions and Branches of the Technical Secretariat should during their activities more actively seek out opportunities to directly engage with stakeholder communities closest to their activities and develop specific E&O strategies (including in the context of public diplomacy) to inform audiences, improve work routines, or even to be deployed in contexts such as recruitment campaigns.

States Parties and their National Authorities occupy a special position in any E&O strategy. Not only are they key to active engagement with stakeholders on the local level, they also play central roles in the effective implementation of the CWC. The Technical Secretariat ought to aim for results-based activities, in function of which it should develop a good understanding of existing local capacities and needs to stimulate sustained engagement on the local and regional levels by National Authorities.

Based on the above general background, the ABEO strongly believes that embedding E&O as a fundamental element in activities involving key stakeholders would greatly benefit the work of the OPCW and its Technical Secretariat. More specifically, States Parties may wish to consider the following recommendations for adoption at the Fourth Review Conference:

- To support the role of the States Parties as primary implementers of E&O. This could include the following elements:
 - make E&O a regular part of the regional and annual meetings of National Authorities, with opportunities to share lessons learned and best practices; and
 - identify between 2019 and the Fifth Review Conference (2023), one or two national 'champions' in each region who could play a leadership role to supplement the work of the OPCW in developing and implementing appropriate E&O activities. Such initiatives could support and enhance the implementation of initiatives pursued under Article XI of the CWC.
- To develop and implement between 2019 and 2023 models for training OPCW staff in the most effective methods of communication involving active learning approaches so that these become standard across the organisation after the Fifth Review Conference. Regular opportunities to share good practices and lessons learned should be part of this process.
- To draw on well-established evaluation approaches from education to develop an assessment approach for E&O that is compatible with the Results-Based Management framework currently used by the Technical Secretariat.

- To continue and to expand interaction with key stakeholder groups. In particular:
 - The ABEO should work with International Council of Chemical Associations (ICCA) Joint Steering Committee, and the Chemical Industry Coordination Group (CICG) to develop outreach activities for industry, particularly with small and medium enterprises and those not routinely subject to inspections.
 - The ABEO should continue its co-operation with International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC) and other chemistry associations to increase its E&O activities and increase the incorporation of ethics training in chemical curricula.
- With a view to raising awareness and educating future generations, to encourage States Parties to support the introduction of the principles of responsible conduct in secondary education and specific modules on dual-use research, chemical safety and security, and responsible science in technical and university education.
- To take advantage of the newer, more interactive approaches to online learning with a view of enhancing its capacity-building activities. The new web platform comes at an opportune moment to enable OPCW to become a leader in this approach to E&O.
- To take advantage of the new OPCW website to provide resources for use by the National Authorities and others for E&O activities with a variety of audiences.
- Given the growing concern about possibilities of using current unscheduled toxic chemicals or future toxic chemicals as a weapon in armed conflict or as an instrument of opportunistic use by terrorist entities and other non-state actors, the ABEO members view it as opportune to increase awareness of the so-called General Purpose Criterion in E&O activities in order to avoid inadvertent contributions to the re-emergence of chemical weapons.
- As appropriate, the OPCW should make clear how its E&O activities support the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

To maintain and possibly expand the OPCW's E&O activities, States Parties should provide for sufficient resources to design, develop and implement E&O strategies (including public diplomacy).

Equally important is for States Parties to allocate the necessary funds to maintain educational tools (especially e-learning modules), update their content and upgrade the underlying technology and educational strategies. In the effort to engender and sustain E&O on the regional and local levels (including in support of Article XI goals), such resource support should also include the translation of educational materials in the six official languages (at a minimum) and wherever possible, direct support to make such materials available in other national languages upon request.