

# Visions and elements of a longer-term education and outreach strategy

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# Trends

- Core aim of keeping world free from CW will remain unchanged, but responsibilities, tasks and functions of both States Parties and Technical Secretariat **will inevitably evolve** to continue meeting this goal
- **New generations** of stakeholders and new types of stakeholder constituencies will uphold the fundament of the CWC
  - They will require deep understanding of the convention, its origins and the evolution of the treaty regime
- Broader political, social and economic developments in combination with advances in science and technology and their practical applications will **inform stakeholders' appreciation** on how to best preserve the CWC's core objectives

# Role of education and outreach

- Draw in and prepare **fresh generations and new types of stakeholders** for participation in the debates on the future of CWC and the norm against CW
- Contribute towards the **building of consensus on the future roles and tasks** for the OPCW
- Help to **identify direct challenges** to the norm against CW and support informed debate on how to address them
- Contribute to **explaining to outside audiences** OPCW policies in general, and specific measures in response to special challenges in particular

# ABEO's contribution to goals and trends

- Developing strategic visions and education and outreach strategies for the benefit of the OPCW
- Critically analysing relevant initiatives undertaken by different branches of the Technical Secretariat
- Identifying relevant stakeholder communities and recommending strategies for reaching out to and engaging with them;
- Directly engaging with key stakeholder communities, both as a process of learning and of communicating strategies; and
- Participating directly in education and outreach activities on the international, national or local levels

# Time perspectives

- **Short to medium term:** the trends are likely to engender fundamental debates on the priority to be accorded to completing original objectives laid out in the treaty text relative to novel challenges emerging on the horizon.
- **Longer time frame:** the discussions are likely to centre on how to best govern the treaty regime in ongoing support for the core aim under changing circumstances

# Building social consensus

- Raising tangible barriers to prevent their members from engaging in any activity that directly or indirectly could contribute to the erosion of the norm against CW and of the CWC;
- Keeping stakeholders informed of and having them actively participate in treaty-mandated activities (e.g., different facets of the verification regime) so as to prevent the erosion of their relevancy; and
- Engaging them in the further development of the treaty regime (including concrete implementation measures) in light of the changing national or international environments in which the CWC must remain relevant

# Addressing direct challenges

- The declaration of new CW holdings as a consequence of either a new state becoming party to the CWC or an existing state party discovering a previously unreported stockpile;
- Erosion of confidence in the CWC as a consequence of the OPCW's inability to close the dossier on a particular state party;
- Use of toxic chemicals as a method of warfare and dithering by the international community, whether in the OPCW decision-making organs or other international bodies, such as the UN Security Council, to uphold the global norm against chemical warfare;
- Allegations that other states or their nationals are contributing to the acquisition or use of CW by other state or non-state actors. In view of the degree of universalisation of the CWC (192 out of 196 UN members) such allegations almost invariably implicate States Parties to the CWC; and
- The conduct of politically charged discussions on CW use or CW acquisition and possession outside the OPCW (e.g., UN Security Council) that tends to undermine public confidence in the global prohibition against CW;
- Etc.

# Overarching theme

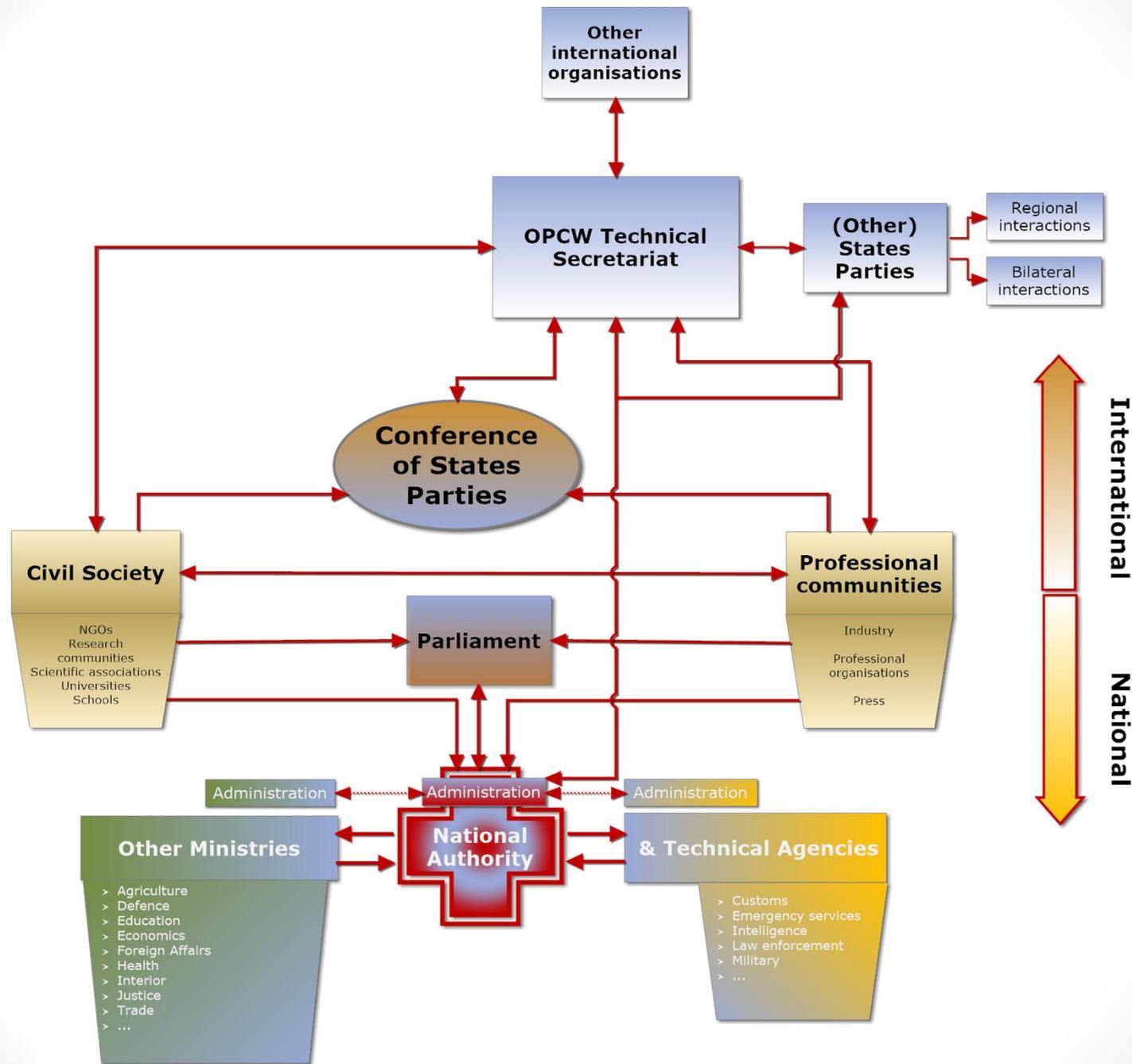
- 'Prevention of re-emergence of CW'
  - appeals to the future of the norm
  - affects how one views the concrete implementation of different treaty provisions, the future of the verification regime, or interactions with the chemical industry and other stakeholders.
  - Builds on the preambular paragraph 'to exclude completely the possibility of the use of CW, through the implementation of the provisions of this Convention '
  - Phrase is sufficiently malleable to function as an umbrella for a plethora of activities taking place in different settings
- However, phrase is by and large still semantically void
  - Need to inject sufficient substance to avoid utilising an empty shell
  - No overstuffing to avoid denying it required malleability for use in different contexts and settings

# Common understandings – 1

- **Education as a strategy**
  - Covers different goals & strategies
  - Formality and goal orientation
  - Builds on prior knowledge, expertise and skills
  - Context and setting will determine best methodology and degree of formality
- **Outreach as a strategy**
  - reaches out to population segments that may otherwise not be confronted with the subject matter
  - often seeks to develop and nurture constituencies to sustain an entity's goals in the future, and may build partnerships with other institutions or individuals to further this strategy;
  - supplements policies or activities by official bodies, and may rely on activities by non-official bodies, such as civil society constituencies;
  - as an activity it is mobile in the sense that it seeks out potential target audiences and then reaches out to them;
  - it generally has a short time frame, usually limited to the activity at hand; and
  - it informs or assists rather than instructs target audiences. It relies on leaflets, newsletters, advertising; stalls and displays, and dedicated events, such as open days or sponsored events. Organisations or institutions may also set up dedicated websites for outreach purposes.

# Common understandings – 2

- Public diplomacy as a strategy
  - 'the public, interactive dimension of diplomacy which is not only global in nature, but also involves a **multitude of actors and networks**. It is a key mechanism through which nations **foster mutual trust and productive relationships** and has become crucial to building a secure global environment.'
  - 'to **capture the emerging trends in international relations** where a range of non-state actors with some standing in world politics—supranational organizations, sub-national actors, non-governmental organizations, and (in the view of some) even private companies—communicate and engage meaningfully with foreign publics and thereby **develop and promote public diplomacy policies and practices of their own**.'
  - Hence, need for overarching theme.



# Opportunistic use of industrial toxic chemicals

- **Basic characteristics**
  - No autochthonous development or production of the toxic agent
  - Usually obtained from industrial production plants or storage sites
    - AQI also hijacked lorries transporting liquid chlorine from Jordan and Syria to Baghdad and then rigged the vehicles with explosives
  - Attacks end after stockpile of toxic agent has been depleted
- **Other scenarios**
  - Other types of attack have involved sabotaging storage facilities, deliberate release into the environment (industrial action), or deliberate targeting of such installation by artillery (e.g., around Sarajevo)
  - In criminal or terrorism cases, occasionally off-the-shelf poisons (e.g., rodent exterminators) or caustic substances (e.g., acid attacks) have been applied
  - More toxic substances than usually considered as warfare agents become a possible weapon
    - E.g., in the Middle East *phosphine* – a chemical belonging to the nerve agent family – is widely used as a rodent pesticide and for fumigation in agriculture

# Addressing public perceptions of chemical warfare

- Victims in war zones perceive chemical warfare differently from outside observers
  - Victims view chemical warfare as one nuisance among many
    - Experiences from 1<sup>st</sup> World War
    - Also in testimonials from Syrian civil war
  - In most circumstances, chemical attacks are far fewer than ones with explosives
    - However: denial of shelter has profound psychological impact
- Statistical simplicity versus international law
  - Often asked: Why does international community respond to CW attacks, but remain indifferent to general war atrocities?
    - E.g., Ghouta: several hundreds of fatalities versus 120,000 war dead at the time
  - Outsiders respond to emotional images (on social media) in isolation from totality of war atrocities
    - Impulsive calls for humanitarian intervention, including military strikes
    - Tendency to ignore existence of CWC and opportunities it offers
  - What public discourse does the OPCW have to counter such challenges of perception?

# Implications for protection and assistance

- OPCW preparedness
  - Many (preventive) activities & training within OPCW framework
  - Public communication of such activities
- However, how are the preparations translated into action in case of acute need?
  - Does the public know of triggers and procedures?
  - How can the OPCW overcome political sensitivities in the pursuit of effective humanitarian action?
  - Rise of the non-state actor as target of chemical attacks
    - How do these victims get access to (elementary) protection & assistance?

# A corrosive challenge for the OPCW

- Problems of chemical warfare present themselves in the present, but may have long-term consequences for CWC regime
  - Matters cannot be ignored
  - Armed conflicts do not start or end in clear-cut ways anymore
    - Toxic chemical incidents may continue after main fighting has abated
- Urgent need for:
  - Effective action against CWC violators (particularly Article XII measures)
  - Effective communication strategies
    - Explain treaty framework, procedures and legal options to lay audiences
    - Engage early with stakeholder communities immediately concerned
    - Develop a clear and timely (even pro-active) narrative of actions on the ground
    - Challenge gross inaccuracies in public reports and narratives
    - Address any serious allegation or refute them in the clearest possible way
- Need for speedy adaptation to new realities
  - OPCW must address the issues head-on
  - Adaptation of treaty regime and political action by community of States Parties
  - Public cannot accept national political expediency over core CWC goals



# THE TRENCH

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