



Ninetieth Session
12 – 15 March 2019

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NOTE BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL**REPORT ON THE OPERATION OF THE ADVISORY BOARD
ON EDUCATION AND OUTREACH FROM 2016 TO 2018**

1. Paragraph 4 of the decision by the Conference of States Parties (hereinafter “the Conference”) on the establishment of the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach (ABEO), as adopted by the Conference at its Twentieth Session (C-20/DEC.9, dated 3 December 2015), stipulates that the Executive Council (hereinafter “the Council”) shall review the operation of the ABEO after three years. The Director-General issues this report to the Council at its Ninetieth Session, with a view to assisting the Council’s deliberations in this regard.
2. This Note is based on the three previous reports by the Director-General to the Council and Conference on the Board’s activities for 2016 (EC-84/DG.7 C-22/DG.1, dated 5 January 2017), 2017 (EC-86/DG.29 C-22/DG.17, dated 4 October 2017), and 2018 (EC-89/DG.22 C-23/DG.12, dated 20 September 2018).

Appointments to the ABEO

3. Following the decision to establish the ABEO, a selection process for its members was performed in conformity with the ABEO’s terms of reference. Following the receipt of nominations from States Parties (as called for in Note S/1323/2015, dated 4 November 2015), the Director-General appointed 15 experts to serve on the Board for an initial term of three years (EC-81/DG.9 C-21/DG.2, dated 18 February 2016).
4. With the first term of office of ABEO members expiring at the end of 2018, the Director-General issued a call for nominations for ABEO membership from 2019 to 2021 (S/1574/2018, dated 31 January 2018), noting the need to start a process of rotating memberships and outlining areas of expertise particularly relevant to the Board’s anticipated work for the period from 2019 to 2021. The new composition of the ABEO from 1 January 2019 onwards has since been communicated to States Parties (EC-90/DG.3 C-24/DG.1, dated 12 December 2018).

Organisation of the ABEO’s work from 2016 to 2018

5. The ABEO met twice each year from 2016 to 2018 for its regular sessions at OPCW Headquarters in The Hague. In addition, Board members, either individually or in groups, conducted a set of intersessional activities, including participation in regional meetings of National Authorities and other events.



6. In accordance with its terms of reference, at its First Session the Board elected Dr Jean Pascal Zanders of Belgium as its Chairperson and Dr Edith Valles of Argentina as its Vice-Chairperson. While Dr Zanders was re-elected as Chairperson by the Board for 2017 and 2018, Dr Valles served as Vice-Chairperson again in 2017 and was succeeded by Dr Austin Aluoch of Kenya for 2018.
7. This Note will highlight some of the work undertaken by the ABEO and contributions made since its inception in early 2016. More detailed summaries are available in the three annual reports by the Director-General referenced in paragraph 2 above, as well as the ABEO reports issued after each of its regular sessions.¹

Regular sessions of the Board

8. Following its terms of reference, the ABEO held two regular sessions each year and issued a report after each session. These are as follows: First Session, on 28 and 29 April 2016 (ABEO-1/1, dated 29 April 2016); Second Session, from 4 to 6 October 2016 (ABEO-2/1, dated 6 October 2016); Third Session, from 14 to 16 March 2017 (ABEO-3/1, dated 16 March 2017); Fourth Session, from 29 to 31 August 2017 (ABEO-4/1, dated 31 August 2017); Fifth Session, from 27 February to 1 March 2018 (ABEO-5/2, dated 1 March 2018); and Sixth Session, from 28 to 30 August 2018 (ABEO-6/1, dated 30 August 2018).
9. All ABEO sessions were supported by the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter “the Secretariat”) in both substantive and administrative terms and developed some common traits over time. All sessions were, for example, opened by the Director-General and received an update from the ABEO Secretary on relevant developments at the OPCW since the Board’s previous session. ABEO sessions also featured regular updates from Board members on their intersessional activities, allowed for interaction of Board members with the heads of relevant Secretariat units, and provided an opportunity to conduct a briefing for States Parties on the work undertaken by the Board.
10. At its Second Session, the Board decided to invite representatives of the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry and the International Council of Chemical Associations to observe all future sessions. Additional expert observers might be invited to the Board’s future sessions according to their expertise and their potential to contribute to the issues to be discussed at each session.
11. During its Third Session, the Board received the “Director-General’s Request to the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach to Provide Advice on the Incorporation of Education and Outreach (E&O) Theory or Practice into E&O Activities of the OPCW, as the Organisation Transitions to a Focus on Preventing the Re-Emergence of Chemical Weapons”, as contained in Annex 2 of the report of that session (ABEO-3/1).
12. Given the Organisation’s limited expertise in the latest advances in educational theory, this assumed high relevance in the advice the Board would be able to provide

¹ See <https://www.opcw.org/resources/documents/subsidiary-bodies/advisory-board-education-and-outreach>.

to the Organisation. While building on such conceptual considerations, it was equally important that the advice from the Board be practicable, including concrete actions and projects. Following intersessional work by the Board and further discussions at its Fourth Session, the report was submitted to the Director-General in December 2017 and published in February 2018.

13. This was followed up by the Director-General during the Fifth Session of the ABEO with a request to the Board to revisit the information contained in Annex 2 of its report (ABEO-5/1, dated 12 February 2018) and to convert this into a user-friendly brochure for States Parties, with a view to assisting them in their education and outreach activities at the national level. In order to address this request, the Board set up a coordinating group to prepare a draft for discussion in time for its Sixth Session, in August 2018.
14. The Board, in this last session in its original composition, reviewed and finalised the brochure text. The Secretariat subsequently ensured that the brochure was translated into all official languages of the Organisation and hard copies were made available to States Parties during the Twenty-Third Session of the Conference.²
15. The Board also agreed to prepare a handover note to the new ABEO membership, taking up its work in January 2019, with relevant topics for consideration.

Intersessional activities

16. ABEO-related activities during the intersessional periods were undertaken by Board members either individually or collectively, both within and outside the OPCW organisational framework. Collaboration was aided by the establishment of an electronic platform designed to enable the Board members to collaborate virtually. The platform enabled the creation of separate areas for work in informal working groups or for the Board as a whole.
17. In May and June 2016, several Board members were invited by the Secretariat to attend the regional meetings on education and outreach that were organised in Tehran, the Islamic Republic of Iran (23 and 24 May); Johannesburg, South Africa (13 and 14 June); and Asunción, Paraguay (28 and 29 June). During those meetings, the participating Board members made presentations to representatives of States Parties on the ABEO's mandate, activities and plans, and on their own vision and experience with regard to education and outreach activities of relevance to the Chemical Weapons Convention.
18. Also in 2016, the ABEO Chairperson provided briefings on the Board's work to the Council at its Eighty-Third Session (13 October) and to the Conference at its Twenty-First Session (1 December). He also led a session devoted to education and outreach during the OPCW Open Day event (4 May).
19. In May and June 2017, several Board members were invited by the Secretariat to attend the regional meetings of National Authorities and participate in the high-level

² See <https://www.opcw.org/resources/documents/subsidiary-bodies/advisory-board-education-and-outreach> for the English version of the brochure.

panel discussions to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the OPCW. The meetings took place in Tbilisi, Georgia (3 to 5 May); Dubai, the United Arab Emirates (16 to 18 May); Montego Bay, Jamaica (13 to 15 June); and Banjul, the Gambia (18 to 20 July).

20. In addition, the ABEO Vice-Chairperson gave presentations on education and outreach to participants in the Symposium on Women in Chemistry at OPCW Headquarters on 2 May and to the Open-Ended Working Group on the Future Priorities of the OPCW on 19 June. Furthermore, the ABEO Chairperson gave a presentation to the Conference at its Twenty-Second Session on the Board's work and its then pending report on the role of education and outreach in preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons (ABEO-5/1).
21. During 2018, the ABEO Chairperson gave a presentation on the Board's work and its recent report on the role of education and outreach in preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons to the Open-Ended Working Group for the Preparation of the Fourth Review Conference³ (30 May) and ABEO member Professor Alastair Hay delivered a presentation on behalf of the Board to the Fourth Review Conference (23 November).
22. Last, but not least, Professor Hay also conducted side events on active learning approaches both during the Twenty-Second Session of the Conference and the Fourth Review Conference, as well as for Secretariat staff in August 2018.

Assessment and future work of the ABEO

23. The operation of the ABEO during its first three years of operation has been a success, as the Board has enriched the Organisation's education and outreach work along several dimensions, including elaboration of the conceptual underpinnings of the OPCW education and outreach activities, support of Secretariat capacity-building events, and preparation of an easy to use brochure for States Parties in their education and outreach efforts.
24. Since the ABEO's establishment, its work has evolved significantly. During its first year of operation, the Board had to establish its practices and procedures and arrive at common understandings on the scope of its work. The second year saw the emergence of a more conceptual focus, linked to the request by the Director-General for a substantive report by the end of 2017. This highlighted the importance of active learning approaches and the use of e-learning to reach larger audiences more easily. The ABEO's third year of operation, 2018, saw the transition of its work toward developing a practical tool for States Parties—in the form of a brochure—to use in their engagement activities.

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Fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

25. Looking ahead, the Director-General:

- (a) requests the ABEO to continue focusing on developing practical education and outreach tools and materials, with a view to facilitating and enhancing the engagement activities both of States Parties and the Secretariat;
- (b) asks that Board members continue to make themselves available to support, upon request, Secretariat and State Party engagement and capacity-development activities and events;
- (c) encourages individual Board members to make available their expertise in specific areas of education and outreach, such as active learning or e-learning, in order to build capacity within the Secretariat; and
- (d) suggests that the Council may wish to consider undertaking another review of the operation of the ABEO in early 2022.

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