



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Twenty-Fourth Session
25 – 29 November 2019

C-24/WP.1
27 November 2019
ENGLISH only

**STATEMENT BY PROFESSOR ALASTAIR HAY ON BEHALF
OF THE OPCW ADVISORY BOARD ON EDUCATION AND OUTREACH TO THE
TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,
Director-General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

In a month's time, the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach (ABEO) of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) will have completed its fourth year of work. During 2019, the ABEO convened twice at the OPCW Headquarters— from 26 to 28 February and from 20 to 22 August. It welcomed eight new members from Argentina, Australia, Guatemala, India, Japan, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, and Pakistan. The ABEO also benefited from substantive input by the permanent observers from the International Union for Pure and Applied Chemistry and the International Council of Chemical Associations.

The first ABEO meeting introduced the new members to the OPCW and its Technical Secretariat. During the discussions with Heads of Divisions and Branches, the different dimensions of education and outreach (E&O) were discussed in function of their respective objectives, after which ABEO members identified possible areas of new activities. In 2017 and early 2018, much of the ABEO's attention was focused on the conceptual dimensions of E&O, practical application of E&O principles and tools for States Parties and their National Authorities, as well as the Technical Secretariat, to use. The ABEO continued the development of practical tools this year, while also exploring new avenues for supporting and promoting the longer-term goals of the Chemical Weapons Convention through E&O.

To facilitate its work, the ABEO once again set up intersessional working groups that have undertaken several concrete projects. You have been able to watch one outcome before the start of the morning and afternoon sittings of the present session of the Conference of the States Parties on the screen behind me—an engaging animated video clip that provides a quick introduction to the core goals of the Convention and achievements since its entry into force in 1997. It can be used for any audience. Some other projects I will highlight later on.

Other project ideas will come to fruition in the course of next year. During the ABEO's second meeting in August, we applied the principles of interactive learning to ourselves to prioritise various project proposals and determine which ones should be realised in the short term or over a longer period.



Concrete realisations

Among the primary goals the ABEO listed in its address to the Fourth Review Conference is to support the role of the States Parties as primary implementers of E&O. We would like to make E&O a regular agenda item of the regional and annual meetings of National Authorities.

The ABEO also notes that a breakout session on E&O took place on 7 November during the twenty-first annual meeting of the National Authorities using an active learning process called Jigsaw. The theme was based on the brochure produced by the ABEO for use by States Parties last year. Four breakout groups in the session proposed concrete recommendations that the ABEO will take into consideration in its next meetings. The E&O session was conducted by a staff member of the Technical Secretariat and was based on a template developed by an ABEO member.

To follow up on two other recommendations presented by the Fourth Review Conference, the ABEO has taken advantage of two recent developments.

The new OPCW website has enabled the ABEO to work with the Public Affairs Branch to provide new resources (in addition to those already present) for use by the National Authorities and others for E&O activities with a variety of audiences. These include exercises and discussion questions to help National Authorities and others use resources such as the FIRES films and the Hague Ethical Guidelines in their E&O activities. There are also reference materials for those who want to learn more about E&O theory and practice.

The new OPCW e-learning platform comes at an opportune moment to enable the Organisation to become a leader in this approach to E&O. The ABEO is engaging with the Technical Secretariat to promote the potential for newer, more interactive approaches to online learning as a way to enhance a range of the OPCW's capacity-building activities. For example, a one-day workshop after the second ABEO meeting introduced some of the new approaches to a group from across relevant Divisions and Branches.

In addition to the animated video I mentioned above, the ABEO has produced a short flyer that lists available E&O resources and ABEO activities. It is available here at this session of the Conference of the States Parties and will be continually updated as a convenient way for States Parties to stay updated on the ABEO's work.

Ongoing and future work

Two additional intersessional working groups are looking into opportunities for using historical events relating to chemical weapon use and chemical weapon disarmament as educational moments or to raise awareness.

Furthermore, in fulfilment of another ambition outlined in the address to the Fourth Review Conference, the ABEO is preparing options to enhance awareness of dual-use chemicals—especially ones that are not listed in any of the schedules—and the general purpose criterion among key constituencies, notably the industry, scientists and students.

In the coming year, the ABEO will continue to produce practical materials that support the work of the National Authorities and others to carry out E&O activities. We will continue

and, we hope, expand our interactions with the National Authorities and the Technical Secretariat in the areas of active learning and interactive methods, including online. And we will resume the priority-setting we began at the second meeting last August, with the goal of identifying several larger projects that we would develop in consultation with the Director-General and key parts of the Technical Secretariat. Given that the projects would require additional institutional and financial resources, we hope that one or more of them could be launched by the end of the current term of the ABEO in 2021.

Conclusion

Mr Chairperson, time is unfortunately too short to discuss the various dimensions of the ABEO's ideas about the possible roles of E&O in furthering the OPCW's goals. I have given you and the delegates a flavour—hopefully a rich one—of current thinking within the ABEO and the ways in which we are working to achieve them.

The ABEO continues to work with the Technical Secretariat to enhance the E&O capacities of staff members when they interact with States Parties and key stakeholder communities.

By way of conclusion I wish to thank, on behalf of the Board members, all States Parties that have recognised the work of the ABEO and support its goal of promoting substantive interaction between the OPCW and its many stakeholder constituencies, with a view to safeguarding the world from the re-emergence of chemical weapons.

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank Dr Jean Pascal Zanders (Belgium) who has chaired the ABEO for the past four years. At its eighth session last August, the ABEO members elected Dr Jo Husbands (United States of America) and Dr Adriana Bernacchi (Argentina) as Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson for 2020.

I request that this statement be issued as an official document of the Conference and be published on the OPCW public website.

I thank you.

--- 0 ---