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OPCW

STUDY GUIDE

Executive Board's Address

Honourable Member State Representatives,

We welcome to the simulation of the Executive Council of Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. We shall be simulating a 90th session of the Executive Council of Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, as stipulated by the Article VIII of the Chemical Weapons Convention. That being said, we expect all the representatives to be vigilant and well aware of their rights, duties, perquisites and prerogatives as designated diplomats of their respective Member States.

We hope that you have already begun your initial research for the conference. We also hope that the study guide helps you get a clear picture of the agenda so that further substantive enquiries may be made from your side, keeping in mind your country's policies and stances.

We also would like to request all representatives to go through the existing documents and their efficaciousness in resolving the problems that have led to the current agenda being placed on the list of the provisional agendas, for example the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), documents of Executive Council of OPCW and documents and articles section found at the end of this document.

We expect the Representatives to be very well researched with respect to the agenda, the powers, and the mandate of the Assembly of the Executive Council of Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. We also are open to resolving all doubts and queries that a representative may have at any point in time before the conference. We expect nuanced debate and not platitudinous speeches, practical solutions and not dystopian ideas, proactive approach and not a reactive one.

Given below are some guidelines that we expect one and all to follow:

1. As mentioned, we shall be simulating the 90th *Session of the Executive Council of Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons* as stipulated by the Article VIII of the CWC.
2. The provisional agenda has been set as “*Upholding global use against chemical weapons*”. The same is expected to be adopted by the Council for all substantive purposes.
3. We shall be following the UN4MUN *Rules of Procedure for all intents and purposes in the Council with regard to the conduct of business*. A document explaining the same shall be sent across to the Representatives. Keep in mind that as Delegates, it is your duty to know what RoPs are and as the Executive Board, it is our duty to make you experience those Rules of Procedure.
4. Please keep in mind that all Representatives may not breach the Code of Conduct of the Conference in the committee sessions, failing which the Representatives may be severely objurgated without any appeals. No representative may hold the floor without previously having obtained permission from the Executive Board.
5. Please keep in mind that the ability to understand the agenda at hand and the mandate of the given committee is of essence while thinking of practical solutions that the committee may choose to incorporate in the strategy for the given agenda.
6. The official language of the Council will be English. Representatives, however, may address the Council in Russian, Chinese, French, Spanish or Arabic, if they can make copies of their speeches available to all other members in English.

Lastly, we request all the delegates to put sincere efforts in preparation and research for the simulation and work hard to make it a fruitful learning experience for all. Feel free to contact us if you have any queries or doubt.

With Regards,
May the diplomacy prevail ,
Signed,



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Chemical Weapons

What are Chemical Weapons?

Chemical Weapons have been used since the First World War with agents such as Chlorine and Phosgene gas. Today, there are nine varieties of Chemical Weapon covered by the Chemical Weapons Convention:

Choking agents - inflict injury mainly on the respiratory tract - i.e. they damage the nose, throat, and lungs. Usually inhaled, which causes the alveoli to send a stream of fluid into the lungs, effectively drowning the victim. Example include Chlorine and Phosgene

Blister agents - act via inhalation and contact with skin. They affect the eyes, respiratory tract, and skin, first as an irritant and then as a cell poison. As the name suggests, blister agents cause large and often life-threatening skin blisters which resemble severe burns. Example include Sulphur and Nitrogen Mustard

Blood agents - distributed via the blood and usually enter the body through inhalation. They inhibit the ability of blood cells to use and transfer oxygen, which suffocates the victim's body. Examples include Hydrogen Cyanide and Arsine

Nerve agents - easily dispersed, highly toxic and have rapid effects both through contact and when inhaled. Nerve agents are simple and straightforward to produce, and the materials required are cheap and easily obtained. Examples include Sarin (or if you prefer, isopropyl methylphosphonofluoridate) which was used in Syria in 2013

Riot control agents - any agent that produces irritating or disabling effects on humans but whose effects dissipate after the cessation of contact

Potential Chemical Weapon Agents - new weapons based on Biotechnological research which are, as of yet, unsuitable for the military purpose

Mustard agents - usually classified as "blistering agents" due to the similarity of the symptoms. However, since mustard agents also cause damage to the eyes, respiratory system and internal organs, they are technically described as "blistering and

tissue-injuring agents'. Mustard gas (bis-(2-chloroethyl) sulphide) reacts with a wide variety of biological substances and its symptoms can take up to 24 hours to detect

Psychotomimetic Agents - includes substances which, when taken in small doses, cause effects comparable to psychotic disorders or other symptoms to do with the central nervous system (loss of feeling, paralysis, rigidity, etc.). Psychotomimetic chemicals are sometimes used as recreational drugs, as examples include Phencyclidine and LSD, though the weaponisation of such would be difficult and ineffective

Toxins - effective and specific poisons produced by living organisms. Toxins are created by various organisms such as bacteria, fungi, algae and plants. Many of them are extremely deadly, being as they are much more toxic than nerve agents. Examples include saxitoxin and ricin.

Who has used Chemical Weapons in the past?

Chemical Weapons were used across Asia and in Nazi Concentration Camps during the Second World War. The Cold War (1945-1991) saw a rise in the development of such weapons despite the Geneva Convention with an estimated 25 states producing chemical stockpiles. Only three states have no Chemical Weapons whatsoever (Albania, India and an unconfirmed third thought to be South Korea) while others including the USA and Russia refuse to meet destruction deadlines. That said, chemical Weapon use has been mercifully relatively uncommon since the end of World War Two with only a few notable instances, some of which are detailed below: Throughout the Iran-Iraq which started in 1980 war Iraq used various chemical weapons across numerous battles. Early in the conflict, Iraq began to employ mustard gas and tabun delivered by bombs dropped from airplanes; approximately 5% of all Iranian casualties are directly attributable to the use of these agents. About 100,000 Iranian soldiers were victims of Iraq's chemical attacks. Many were hit by mustard gas. The official estimate does not include the civilian population contaminated in bordering towns or the children and relatives of veterans, many of whom have developed blood, lung and skin complications, according to the Organization for Veterans. Nerve gas agents killed about 20,000 Iranian soldiers immediately, according to official reports. Of the 80,000 survivors, some 5,000 seek medical treatment regularly and about 1,000 are still hospitalized with severe, chronic conditions. The most infamous of these attacks was the massacre of the Kurdish people of

Iraq, which took place on March 16, 1988. This attack left an estimated 5,000 people dead and a further 10,000 injured, with thousands more dying of related illnesses. This attack remains the worst use of Chemical Weapons against civilians in history. More recently of course were the attacks in Syria. While it is (at the time of writing) unclear who precisely was responsible, UN weapons inspectors have confirmed that the Nerve Agent Sarin was used, the same chemical used by Hussein 25 years earlier in Iran. Analysis of the weapons used, the origin of the attacks and the quantities of Sarin involved point to the Syrian military is responsible, leading France to claim that the attack "could not have been ordered and carried out by anyone but the Syrian government". The United States is equally certain of Assad's culpability. The Syrian government meanwhile places the blame for this attack on rebel groups, claiming such an attack would have been illogical. This viewpoint is supported by Russia, which has made reaching any solution exceedingly difficult. Common ground has finally been reached however, with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons stepping in to monitor and lead the total destruction of all of Syria's Chemical Weapon stockpiles and manufacturing facilities. Terrorist groups have occasionally turned to Chemical Weapons. In the past 20 years there have been several attacks, including the Aum Shinrikyo (a group dedicated to global annihilation) Sarin attack on the Tokyo subway system and multiple attacks on Russia by Chechen groups. Al Qaeda has made numerous threats to use Chemical Weapons against the West, but has yet focused their attention on Iraq and Afghanistan. Largely, they release Chlorine gas from large tanks near civilian areas leading to shocking devastation.

ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Introduction

The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons is the implementing body of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which entered into force in 1997. As of today OPCW has 193 Member States, who are working together to achieve a world free of chemical weapons.

Executive Council

The Council is the executive organ of the Organisation and consists of 41 members who are elected by the Conference to serve two-year terms. The Convention requires that, in order to ensure the Council's effectiveness, it is constituted with due regard to the principle of equitable geographical distribution, the importance of the chemical industry, and political and security interests.

Mandate, Power and Governance

The Council's mandate is to promote the effective implementation of, and compliance with, the Convention. It is also required to supervise the activities of the Secretariat, to cooperate with the National Authority of each State Party, and to facilitate consultations with and cooperation among States Parties, at their request.

The Council has considerable executive powers in relation to the implementation of the Convention. It may, without reference to the Conference:

- conclude agreements with States Parties on behalf of the Organisation in connection with assistance and protection against chemical weapons;
- approve agreements or arrangements relating to the implementation of verification activities negotiated by the Secretariat with States Parties, such as facility agreements; and,
- subject to prior approval by the Conference, the Council may conclude agreements or arrangements with states and international organisations on behalf of the Organisation.

- **The Council plays a key role in the resolution of ambiguities and concerns regarding compliance. As described earlier and as discussed in more detail in the sections on challenge inspections and investigations of alleged use, the Council is the primary focal point designated by the Convention for resolving such concerns.**

A special role is also assigned to the Council in relation to requests for assistance and protection against the use or threat of use of chemical weapons, in accordance with Article X of the Convention.

Finally, the Council is also assigned special powers in the event of a dispute between States Parties about the interpretation or application of the Convention.

The Chemical Weapon Convention

The Chemical Weapon Convention entered into force in 1997. The Chemical Weapon Convention is implemented by the acting body: The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

Main Aims:

“It aims to eliminate an entire category of weapons of mass destruction by prohibiting the development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, retention, transfer or use of chemical weapons by States Parties. States Parties, in turn, must take the steps necessary to enforce that prohibition in respect of persons (natural or legal) within their jurisdiction.

All States Parties have agreed to chemically disarm by destroying any stockpiles of chemical weapons they may hold and any facilities which produced them, as well as any chemical weapons they abandoned on the territory of other States Parties in the past. States Parties have also agreed to create a verification regime for certain toxic chemicals and their precursors (listed in Schedules 1, 2 and 3 in the Annex on Chemicals to the CWC) in order to ensure that such chemicals are only used for purposes not prohibited.

A unique feature of the CWC is its incorporation of the 'challenge inspection', whereby any State Party in doubt about another State Party's compliance can request the Director-General to send an inspection team. Under the CWC's 'challenge inspection'

procedure, States Parties have committed themselves to the principle of 'anytime, anywhere' inspections with no right of refusal.”

OPCW Challenges

The OPCW proudly boasts that 98% of the world’s population lives under the protection of the Chemical Weapons Convention. This, while technically accurate, assumes that the words of the Convention are respected, something which past experience will tell us is far from automatic.

The far more important issue when considering the risks of Chemical Weapons is the whereabouts and ownership of stockpiles. Recent estimates state that around 82% of the world’s Chemical Weapons have been destroyed. This is, of course, only refers to declared stocks leaving the worrying question of the weapons that are not declared.

Furthermore, there still remains 13,000 metric tonnes of Weaponised Chemicals in the hands of various world powers, some of whom may see them as a ‘safe’ alternative to Nuclear Arms as WMDs. The ideology of Mutually Assured Destruction has no place when dealing with Chemical Weapons, as their use is so horrific that no nation would find UN backing for an attack, even if provoked.

The OPCW’s work focuses on nations and their governments, but Chemical Weapons are surprisingly easy and cheap to produce, leading to the widespread danger of terrorist groups using them as an alternative to more conventional attacks. These weapons are incredibly difficult to police, so the chances of a devastating attack going unnoticed are worryingly high.

That is not to say that the OPCW is ineffectual however, as the enormous steps forward in combating Chemical Weapons are due almost entirely to their work. Additionally, the OPCW puts out a huge amount of information regarding safe procedures in an attack and helps to minimise the damage caused. Examples of this are especially prevalent in Syria after the attacks.

Documents and Articles

(These documents are to be read with the guide)

1. <http://bit.ly/2LygkUp>
2. <https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/sc13276.doc.htm>
3. <https://warontherocks.com/2018/06/confrontation-at-the-opcw-how-will-the-international-community-handle-syria-and-skripal/>
4. <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/Timeline-of-Syrian-Chemical-Weapons-Activity>
5. <https://sputniknews.com/europe/201808081067054876-opcw-assistance-salisbury-poisoning-uk/>
6. <https://www.rt.com/news/435782-russia-us-chemical-disarmament-sanctions/>
7. <https://sputniknews.com/europe/201808071067014463-uk-opcw-amesbury-experts/>
8. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/india-deeply-worried-on-reports-of-isis-acquiring-chemical-weapons/articleshow/64948922.cms>
9. <https://www.oneindia.com/international/the-world-is-polarised-again-india-rejects-anti-chemical-weapons-draft-at-opcw-2724335.html>
10. <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2018/08/02/watchdog-says-gaps-in-syrias-chemical-weapons-declaration.html>
11. [https://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B9C2E/\(httpNewsByYear_en\)/7D124FC683FFDEAEC12582A30054EA43?OpenDocument](https://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B9C2E/(httpNewsByYear_en)/7D124FC683FFDEAEC12582A30054EA43?OpenDocument)
12. https://www.opcw.org/fileadmin/OPCW/ICA/180607.FR.EUROPOL_CCTC.pdf
13. <https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/ctif/en/chemical-and-bio-attacks>
14. <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2018/08/03/world/crime-legal-world/watchdog-alleges-discrepancies-syrias-chemical-weapons-declaration/#.W4WbVZMzYb0>
15. <https://thebulletin.org/2018/07/strengthen-the-taboo-against-biological-and-chemical-weapons/>