



CENTRE FOR SECURITY COOPERATION

Cooperative Security Environment with Focus on Arms Control Pillar

“Chemical Weapons Convention Workshop”

CSE-C1-W-19

11-14 February 2019, Rakitje, Zagreb, Republic of Croatia

Introduction

The aim of the Workshop was to discuss relevant issues related to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and provide a broad overview of the CWC implementation procedures with a special focus on the different aspects and measures in implementing the Convention. This year the main focus was on the issue of Chemical Safety and Security. In addition, the event provided a forum for the countries of the region to present their national CWC implementation-related programmes in terms of safety and security, to exchange information, discuss problematic issues and find possible solutions. An absolutely novel feature of the event was the tabletop exercise (TTX) on the second working day with the focus on national chemical assets, threat, vulnerability and risk assessment.

The event was co-organized by RACVIAC and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and financially supported by OPCW. Two days were devoted to theoretical presentations and discussions – including the above-mentioned TTX.

The Workshop was attended by 23 participants including lecturers and RACVIAC staff. The participants came from

the Republic of Albania (3), Bosnia and Herzegovina (3), Republic of Croatia (3), Republic of North Macedonia (2), Montenegro (3), Romania (1) and Kosovo¹ (3).

Execution

The Workshop was opened with a Welcome Address by RACVIAC Director Major General (ret.) Jeronim Bazo. Director Bazo emphasized that the CWC Workshop represents one of the most important annual activities of RACVIAC. He stated that the main focus of this year's event was Chemical Safety and Security underlining its significance as an essential first step to prevent accidental or intentional misuse of such materials. He also added that for the first time in the history of OPCW-RACVIAC CWC events a tabletop exercise would be conducted. Special gratitude was extended to OPCW for its invaluable cooperation and sponsorship.

In his Welcome Address Mr Rohan Perera, PhD, Senior Programme Officer (International Cooperation Branch, International Cooperation and Assistance Division, OPCW), pointed out how

¹ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence. (In accordance with Arrangements regarding regional representation and cooperation.)

important it is to promote the goals of disarmament, non-proliferation as well as those of peaceful uses of chemicals and full implementation of the Convention. He praised the strong cooperation between OPCW and RACVIAC as a result of which the 16th joint event could be realized this year.



*Welcome address by Major General Jeronim Bazo (ret.),
Director of RACVIAC*

The Welcome Addresses were followed by a very comprehensive introductory presentation by Mr Milan Seman, PhD, Senior Industry Officer (OPCW) on CWC/OPCW and the Verification Regime.

In his presentation Mr Seman provided an overview of recent developments and current issues affecting the implementation of Article VI as well as the outcomes of the Fourth Review Conference. He gave insight into the very interesting and in terms of the subject matter of the event, very basic question of why industry verification matters. He concluded by outlining a vision for the future of industry verification as well as pointing out the main challenges in the field making the point that the most important issue above all is how to adapt the verification regime to changing risk patterns.

Mr Perera continued by introducing the basic ideas regarding chemical safety and security management. He pointed out that chemicals are surrounding us in our everyday lives, that highly toxic ones can be bought easily and even common ones can be turned into extremely dangerous substances with little effort. Many of them are in the realm of OPCW (“scheduled chemicals”), however, there are several

ones falling outside the responsibility area of the international regime (“non-scheduled chemicals”). The major problem though is constituted by the dual-use chemicals and their diversion. He provided an insight into issues like multiple supply chains and the lack of (proper) safety rules and regulations by many companies. Therefore, safety is a key issue. A new safety and security approach is needed due to the constantly progressing new technologies as well. In 2019 the main focus of OPCW is to help develop as well as improve national policies on safety and security. Mr Perera illustrated his argument with several case studies during his lecture.

The morning session was closed by Mr Seman who delivered a comprehensive presentation on the nature of the chemical threat. He introduced the topic via case studies. Mr Seman also touched on very important topics like whether the chemical threat is overstated or not or the link between Article VI and Safety and Security. He pointed out the recent paradigm shift in the area concerning the increasing importance of attribution.

In the afternoon the introductory presentations were followed by even more comprehensive ones on Chemical Safety and Security: Risk Management and Mitigation Strategies. Mr Perera not only showed the possible results of safety gaps in terms of accidents but also provided the means how to calculate and mitigate the possible risks.

The first part of the afternoon was also reserved for national presentations. In their national presentations the participants from the Republic of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Croatia, Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Romania gave very valuable insights into their national systems with a focus on “Chemical Safety and Security Management: Good Practices with Case Studies/National Frameworks in Relation to Safety and Security Issues”.

In the final block of the first working day the preparation for the TTX took place. During the first phase of the preparation Mr Perera delivered a presentation on the human

Chemical Weapons Convention Workshop

factors in terms of risk management the understanding of which can contribute to better mitigation techniques. He also introduced the “SHELL” Model” which was to be used during the TTX. The first working day was finalised with the detailed introduction of the TTX and its initialization. The major aim of the TTX was to develop the culture of chemical safety and security. The participants worked in groups on the basis of simple scenarios. The scenarios were designed in a way that even those who were not experts in the chemical field could understand them without difficulties.

The second working day was completely devoted to the TTX. The tasks during the TTX via 44 scenarios were as follows: to identify hazards, evaluate risks, and, finally, to develop scenarios and implement measures to mitigate/eliminate the risks.

They had to be assessed and scenarios for mitigation had to be developed by the participants in 5 working groups. At each step of the TTX presentations had to be delivered by the groups on their achievements. The TTX was incredibly informative and interactive: the participants seemingly and admittedly enjoyed it to a large extent.

The event was closed with an evaluation and a brief closing ceremony.

Conclusion

The Workshop was evaluated as highly interesting, professionally valuable and well organized. Many participants underlined the exceptional nature and value of the TTX characterising it as a new approach, a new path in dealing with the issue.

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