
Preface

*Ian R. Kenyon**

As I write this it is almost fourteen years since I sat, on 15 February 1993, at a borrowed desk in the offices of the OPCW Foundation, on Noordwal in The Hague, wondering how one set about establishing the Technical Secretariat of a new international organisation, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The job had a particular urgency, not just because the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) could enter into force any time after 12 January 1995, less than two years away but, more particularly, because the Preparatory Commission, at its first meeting the previous week, had decided to start its substantive work with an expert group meeting, leaving only two weeks for me to find a conference room and to set up rudimentary conference servicing facilities. That we were able to solve this problem and the many, much larger ones that followed was due to teamwork from the group who came from all over the world to join the Provisional Technical Secretariat (PTS) (we ultimately counted 65 different nationalities) and to unstinting support from the members of national delegations on the Commission and its working bodies and from the Netherlands Government and the City of The Hague, acting through the OPCW Foundation.

How did I come to be there? For the previous four years I had been Deputy Leader of the United Kingdom Disarmament delegation in Geneva while the Conference on Disarmament was concluding its work on the CWC. My posting was at an end when I was asked if I was prepared to be the UK Government's candidate to head the secretariat of the preparatory commission which would be required to set up OPCW. I accepted and made my preparations to move to The Hague if I were to be successful in gaining the appointment.

From 13-15 January 1993 the Representatives (mostly the Foreign Ministers) of 130 states met in the UNESCO building in Paris, at the invitation of the French Government, to sign the 1993 Treaty of Paris, better known as the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). At this stage, by signing the text and depositing the signed copy with the United Nations Secretary-General – 'the Depository' – they individually indicated their acceptance of the content of the Convention and their intention to become parties to it through their national constitutional processes. At the same time they collectively, through the adoption of a resolution to set up a Preparatory Commission, started the process of creation of the organisation which was to operate the CWC from its entry into force '180 days after the date of the deposit of the 65th instrument of ratification, but in no case earlier than two years after its opening for signature'.¹ Four weeks later, from

* Executive Secretary to the Preparatory Commission for the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, February 1993 to May 1997.

¹ CWC Article XXI, para. 1.

8 to 12 February 1993, the PrepCom (as it became familiarly known) held its first meeting in The Hague and did indeed appoint me as Executive Secretary and ‘head and chief executive officer’ of the PTS.

In the end, the deposit of the required 65 ratifications took longer than the specified two years and it was a little over four years later, 29 April 1997, before the CWC entered into force. The representatives of 80 out of the then 87 States Parties met in The Hague, on 6 May 1997, for the opening of the First Conference of the States Parties of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, organised and serviced by its own Technical Secretariat. It is a source of great pride to me and to all the team that OPCW was able to ‘hit the ground running’ and to meet all the (very) tight deadlines set out in the CWC for receipt of declarations and for initial inspections with all the necessary infrastructure in place. I am well aware that the Preparatory Commission was unable to complete all the tasks laid upon it in the Paris Resolution and that OPCW has had to find its own solutions to some of these over its first ten years of existence but at least we provided a more than adequate launching pad.

How was this done? How were the staff recruited? Who decided how they should be trained? How was the content of the inspection equipment store decided or the layout of the laboratory planned? What did the preparations cost and who paid? What was involved in building a large new office block on a prime site and why was this not the site originally offered by the city? What were the respective roles of the Provisional Technical Secretariat and the government representatives in the Working Groups and Expert Groups? How effective were their joint efforts to solve the many issues left open by the CWC’s negotiators in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva? How much was left unfinished and what effect did this have on the first years of operation of OPCW? What lessons can be learned?

Once enough time had passed to provide a certain perspective, but while most of us were still around to remember what happened, it seemed a good time to try to capture the history and to start to analyse the lessons. It was in late 2002 that the component of the Harvard Sussex Program on CBW Armament and Arms Limitation that is based at SPRU – Science and Technology Policy Research, University of Sussex in the United Kingdom offered to support a project for this purpose under the expert supervision of Professor Julian Perry Robinson, who has made a lifetime study of CBW arms control and disarmament. Daniel Feakes, who had recently returned to Sussex after three years at OPCW as HSP Researcher in The Hague, agreed to take on the job of principal researcher.

The Director-General of OPCW, Mr Rogelio Pfirter, assured us of his support and we were able to inform the OPCW community of the project through the pages of the OPCW house journal *Chemical Disarmament*. We were provided with modest grants from the Governments of the Netherlands and the United Kingdom which made it possible for us to carry out research in the archives of OPCW and the Netherlands Foreign Ministry and to carry out preliminary interviews in Brussels and The Hague. We are particularly grateful for the assistance in this phase of the project of Harmen van Dijk, Jan Hoekema and Arend Meerburg of the Foreign Ministry; Gerko Hamming and John Heydanus, formerly of the OPCW Foundation; Bob Lagerwaard of the City of The Hague; and Rio Praaning of PA Europe NV. In February 2004 we held two witness

seminars in The Hague. The first, held in the OPCW building, brought together a number of former members of the PTS and delegations and produced several hours of tape-recorded discussion of the work of that body. The second was held in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and brought together officials of the ministry and of the City of The Hague to provide background on the campaign for The Hague to be the seat of OPCW.

The Japan Institute of International Affairs provided a grant to cover the production of a paper on *The OPCW Preparatory Commission: Preparing to Implement the CWC Industry Verification Regime* (which also provided much of the material for Chapter 9).

In early 2006 the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs offered to sponsor the production of a book encapsulating the history of the creation of OPCW as a contribution to the celebration of the tenth anniversary of entry into force of the CWC in April/May 2007; Maarten Lak and Wouter Wormgoor were helpful in this regard. The Ministry kindly provided an additional grant, part of which would be used for the purchase of a number of the books. TMC Asser Press agreed to publish the book. The actual writing was performed by a small team of those who had been most closely involved in the work of the PTS with others providing comments on the drafts at various stages.

I wish to offer my grateful thanks to all those who have given so generously of their time and writing skills: Daniel Feakes; Sergei Kisselev; Ron Manley; Hassan Mashhadi; Johan Rautenbach; Paul Ryan; Lisa Tabassi; and Ralf Trapp. We all checked, and commented upon, and provided text for each others' drafts. The text was reviewed by a group including: Sergey Batsanov; Don Clagett; Richard Guthrie; John Makhubalo; Robert Mathews; and Julian Perry Robinson.

Particular thanks are also offered to the Governments of the Netherlands, Japan and the United Kingdom for their financial support in addition to that provided by HSP and to the Director-General of OPCW for the practical assistance provided by members of that organisation.

All views expressed in this book are the opinions of the authors and do not express the views of any organisation to which they may be, or have been, affiliated. Errors and omissions are the responsibility of the editors.