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Resiliency and the OPCW Scientific Advisory Board: Tales of Providing Scientific Advice During a Pandemic

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Decision makers serving in policymaking organs of international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation instruments often consider and review information with significant scientific underpinning. Engagement with scientific communities helps to ensure that an organisation remains abreast of developments in science and technology, and can continue to adapt to emerging challenges and develop capabilities that enhance operational effectiveness. The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons utilizes its Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) to monitor science and technology development of importance to the Chemical Weapons Convention, States Parties, and the OPCW. The SAB has recently, as everyone else, had to adapt to a challenging and changing working environment – one where travel is restricted and communication taxed. We will discuss the SAB's important role in providing scientific advice to the OPCW, States Parties and policymakers and how the SAB has continued its work during the recent Covid-19 pandemic. Necessary adaptations, success stories and lessons learned to providing scientific advice during uncertain times will be shared. The current challenge has given us an opportunity to test our fortitude and build resiliency into our processes, guaranteeing the SAB's efforts and effectiveness moving forward.

Promotional text

Science underpins treaty implementation. Ensuring that science advice is available to policymakers even during challenging and uncertain times, such as during the recent Covid-19 pandemic, requires forethought and remains critical to proper treaty implementation.

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