



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Twenty-Sixth Session
29 November – 3 December 2021

C-26/NAT.31
29 November 2021
ENGLISH only

GHANA

**STATEMENT BY DR KWAKU AFRIYIE
MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY
AND INNOVATION (MESTI) OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA
AT THE TWENTY-SIXTH SESSION
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,
Director-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

At the outset, I wish to congratulate you, Ambassador Bård Ivar Svendsen of the Kingdom of Norway on your election as Chairperson of the Twenty-Sixth Session of the Conference of the States Parties (“the Conference”) to the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”). It is my hope that you would draw on your rich experience to steer the session to a successful end. I assure you of my delegation’s full support for a successful Conference. I also express my appreciation to the Chairperson of the Twenty-Fifth Session of the Conference, His Excellency José Antonio Zabalgoitia Trejo, Permanent Representative of the United Mexican States, for the excellent manner in which he conducted that session.

My delegation equally extends appreciation to the Director-General, Ambassador Fernando Arias, for the achievements of the Technical Secretariat as noted in his comprehensive report and we reassure him of our confidence in his leadership in the implementation of the Convention.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by H.E. Mr Vusimuzi Madonsela, Permanent Representative of the Republic of South Africa, on behalf of the African Group as well as the statement delivered by H.E. Mr Fikrat Akhundov, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan on behalf of the Members States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China.

We note with satisfaction the significant strides the OPCW has made towards the achievement of total and verifiable destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles. Despite the progress, there are still challenges in the complete elimination and prevention of the likely re-emergence of chemical weapons. It is our considered view that full compliance by States Parties with their obligations under the Convention remains the most effective way to accomplish total disarmament and non-proliferation of chemical weapons.

In this regard, I wish to reiterate Ghana’s strong commitment to the full and effective implementation of the Convention. The Chemical Control and Management Centre of the Environmental Protection Agency of Ghana, in collaboration with other relevant agencies have



continued to spearhead the national implementation efforts, including the maintenance of chemical safety and security, strengthening controls against the possibility of cross-border transfers into Ghana of toxic chemicals prohibited under the Convention, as well as the promotion of the peaceful use of chemistry for economic and technological advancement of Ghana and other States Parties.

Chemical weapons are a grave threat to international security and peace. Ghana therefore condemns and opposes the use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anybody, and under any circumstances. We hold the view that States Parties must work collectively to ensure that perpetrators are held accountable for breaches of the Convention.

We also support the call on the few remaining States not Party to accede to the Convention and come under its scrutiny, verification, and compliance, to accelerate the pace towards the realisation of a world free of chemical weapons.

It has always been the position of Ghana that consensus decisions should at all times be adopted on matters considered fundamental and essential for the efficient functioning of the Organisation and the preservation of the integrity of the Convention. Ghana would have wished that the Executive Council did not have to split over the adoption of the Draft Programme and Budget of the OPCW for 2022–2023, which has been presented before this Conference. My delegation believes that States Parties have a responsibility to adopt the Programme and Budget to enable the OPCW to carry out its crucial functions as effectively as possible. Accordingly, Ghana supports the adoption of the Programme and Budget of the OPCW at this Conference.

While we support the biennial Programme and Budget, my delegation notes with concern that considerable amounts have been transferred out of the International Cooperation and Assistance (ICA) Programme since 2015 for other activities. To ensure the full and effective implementation of the ICA activities, which constitute a core operational programme of the OPCW, we join calls on the Technical Secretariat and States Parties to work collectively to avoid or reduce the need for transfers between major programmes, and to retain unspent funds for future ICA activities in a special fund within the regular budget.

Similarly, my delegation notes that the draft decision on the aerosolised use of central nervous system-acting chemicals (CNS-acting chemicals), which is before this Conference, has been debated on for too long without States Parties reaching a consensus on the matter. With the draft decision, States Parties are called upon to recognise that, the aerosolised use of CNS-acting chemicals is inconsistent with law enforcement as a “purpose not prohibited” under the Convention. Given that the draft decision is concerned with the lethal effects of the use of CNS-acting chemicals as aerosols in law enforcement, but not the use of CNS-acting chemicals for peaceful purposes as in medicine, pharmaceuticals, industry, and agriculture, Ghana is of the view that, the draft decision is consistent with the crucial need by States Parties to prevent the re-emergence or future use of chemical weapons. Ghana, therefore, supports the draft decision, which could prevent the development of offensive weapons under the guise of aerosolised use of CNS-acting chemicals in the context of law enforcement.

The agenda on the appointment of a new Director-General of the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW is also before this Conference. I wish to state that the recommendation for the re-election of the incumbent Director-General, Mr Fernando Arias at the Ninety-Eight Session of the Executive Council, was an eloquent testament of the confidence reposed in his dedicated

and able leadership of the Organisation during his tenure. My delegation also notes with utmost satisfaction the Director-General's central role in the establishment of the OPCW Centre for Chemistry and Technology which stands to contribute greatly to the technological development and capacity building of States Parties, and in expanding opportunities for women to ascend to higher levels of management within the Technical Secretariat, among many others.

My delegation commends the OPCW for its continuous effort to respond to the particular needs of African States Parties for the effective implementation of the Convention through the Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa on the Chemical Weapons Convention ("the Africa Programme"), which is currently in its fifth phase. Ghana and many other African States Parties have benefited from the ongoing training and capacity-building activities of the Programme. We commend the Technical Secretariat for the innovation and adaptability to ensure its continued operation in general and the progress achieved under the Africa Programme despite the constraints posed by COVID-19. To this end, Ghana unequivocally supports the re-election of Ambassador Fernando Arias, as Director-General of the Technical Secretariat.

My delegation also commends the co-facilitators on organisational governance issues, H.E. Ambassador Matthew Neuhaus of Australia and H.E. Ambassador Laura Dupuy of Uruguay, for effectively coordinating discussions on the amendment of the OPCW tenure policy. We support the Africa Group's proposals on the amendment of the OPCW tenure policy and look forward to engaging further to ensure that the recommendations will enhance equitable geographical and gender representation at all levels to afford the Organisation the broad benefits of a diverse, skilled workforce, consistent with Article VIII, paragraph 44 of the Convention.

In conclusion, Mr Chairperson, it is the hope of Ghana that all States Parties will continue to live up to their responsibilities and through the spirit of dialogue and cooperation, to ensure the full and effective implementation of the Convention for the maintenance of international peace and security. Furthermore, it is my hope that deliberations will be devoid of political self-interest but focus solely on the technical and scientific nature of the Organisation.

I thank you for your attention.

I kindly request that this statement be considered as an official document of this Conference and posted on the website and the external server of the OPCW.