



**OPCW**

**Executive Council**

Ninety-Ninth Session

8 – 10 March 2022

EC-99/NAT.20

8 March 2022

ENGLISH only

**GHANA**

**STATEMENT BY H. E. AMBASSADOR FRANCIS DANTI KOTIA  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA TO THE  
OPCW AT THE NINETY-NINTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

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

Ghana congratulates H.E. Dr Eniola Olaitan Ajayi, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, on her ascension as Chairperson of the Ninety-Ninth Session of the Executive Council (“the Council”). My delegation is confident that you would draw on your rich experience to steer the session to a successful end. We assure you of our full support for a successful Council.

We also express our appreciation to the former Ambassador of Morocco to the Kingdom of the Netherlands, H. E. Abdelouahab Bellouki for successfully conducting the Ninety-Eight Session of the Council under the challenging circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. My delegation equally commends H.E. Gudrun Lingner, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Germany to the OPCW, for ensuring continuity and ably guiding the preparation up to this session. We also congratulate H.E. Fernando Arias for his re-election as the OPCW Director-General. We appreciate his comprehensive statement and reassure him of our confidence in his leadership in the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”).

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

My delegation notes with satisfaction that the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons has achieved the verifiable destruction of most of the world’s declared chemical weapons stockpiles. However, we are mindful that the Organisation is still faced with the challenge of preventing the proliferation and re-emergence of chemical weapons. It is our conviction that effective implementation and full compliance by States Parties with their obligations under the Convention remain the most effective way to accomplish total prohibition of chemical weapons and the elimination of their stockpiles.



Ghana wishes to reiterate the imperative for strengthening verification and inspection regimes, while improving capacities at the national level to ensure effective controls of the transfer of banned chemicals. To this end, my delegation commends the OPCW for its continuous effort to respond to the needs and priorities of African States Parties for the effective implementation of the Convention through the Africa Programme which is in its fifth phase. Ghana and many other African States Parties have benefited from capacity-building activities conducted under the Programme in recent times, despite the constraints of the COVID-19 pandemic. We commend the Technical Secretariat for the recent meeting held on 2 and 3 February 2022 to discuss plans for cooperation with partner training centres in Africa to help deliver capacity-building activities related to the implementation of Article X of the Convention. We look forward to the Twentieth Regional Meeting of National Authorities of States Parties in Africa to be organised by the Technical Secretariat in May 2022 to form part of discussions for the design of the sixth phase of the Africa Programme.

Similarly, Ghana observes with satisfaction the continued efforts by the OPCW and States Parties to ensure the full implementation of Article XI of the Convention to advance economic and technological development of Member States, as well as promote international cooperation and peaceful uses of chemistry. We commend the Technical Secretariat for organising the sixth edition of the annual review and evaluation workshop in November 2021, during which States Parties discussed actionable measures towards the full implementation of Article XI.

My delegation is also concerned about frequent allegations and incidents of use of chemical weapons in different parts of the world. We emphasise that the use of toxic chemicals as weapons anywhere, at any time, by anybody, and under any circumstances is unjustifiable and a common threat to our security. We therefore reiterate our view that those responsible for the use of chemical weapons must be held accountable to end impunity.

We also stress that, the Convention remains the only effective legal instrument that seeks to prevent the misuse of chemistry while promoting its development for peaceful purposes. Therefore, the promotion of the universality of the Convention is essential for the speedy realisation of a world free of chemical weapons. Accordingly, there is the need to step up bilateral and multilateral engagements to ensure that the remaining States not Party accede to the Convention and be legally bound to respect its provisions and prohibitions.

It is also important for the Organisation to keep pace with efforts to address any threats posed by chemical terrorism, by developing innovative programmes and activities to support States Parties' mechanisms to meet challenges of misuse or hostile use of chemicals by non-State actors. The Secretariat is further encouraged to maintain regular contact and cooperation with regional and international organisations in the field of counter-terrorism with the view to enhancing information, knowledge exchange, and expertise to counter likely incidents of chemical terrorism. In this regard, Ghana applauds the work of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism led by H.E. Ambassador Vusimuzi Madonsela of the Republic of South Africa and looks forward to the continuous facilitation of discussions on this subject in the context of the Council decision EC-86/DEC.9.

Ghana appreciates the ongoing discussions on organisational governance issues seeking to amend the OPCW tenure policy to ensure that the Technical Secretariat can retain requisite expertise for effective implementation of the Convention. We welcome this initiative and look forward to recommendations thereof, including maintaining geographical balance within the workforce in the Technical Secretariat consistent with paragraph 44 of Article VIII of the Convention.

Additionally, my delegation notes with satisfaction the work progress of the OPCW Centre for Chemistry and Technology (ChemTech Centre) which stands to improve the capacity of the Technical Secretariat to carry out its mandate as well as support States Parties to implement their national implementation obligations. We commend States Parties for their voluntary contributions to the project and join calls for further support for the project to enable its timely completion.

The Convention stands out as the most successful instrument of disarmament and non-proliferation, as we mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention in April 2022. Nevertheless, we should not relent in our collective effort to surmount the challenges still confronting the Organisation. To this end, the Fifth Review Conference should provide another platform for States Parties to assess past activities and adopt measures to ensure that the provisions in the Convention remain relevant and respond to evolving circumstances. Ghana, therefore, welcomes and hopes to engage constructively with the Open-Ended Working Group established to prepare for the Review Conference scheduled for May 2023.

In conclusion, Madam Chairperson, it is the hope of Ghana that deliberations in this session will be guided by the spirit of dialogue and cooperation, to enable all States Parties to live up to their responsibilities and ensure the full and effective implementation of the Convention for the maintenance of international peace and security.

I kindly request that this statement be considered as an official document of this Ninety-Ninth Session of the Council and posted on the website and the external server of the OPCW.

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