



OPCW

Executive Council

101st Session
4 – 6 October 2022

EC-101/NAT.42
4 October 2022
ENGLISH and FRENCH only

MOROCCO

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR MOHAMED BASRI
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO
TO THE OPCW AT THE 101ST SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,
Mr Director-General,
Excellencies,
Dear colleagues,

On behalf of the delegation of the Kingdom of Morocco, I assure you Mr Chairperson, Ambassador Ziad Bin Maashi Al Atiyah, Permanent Representative of the fraternal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, of my country's full support of your chairpersonship of our august Executive Council ("the Council"). I am convinced that your personal and professional qualities will allow you to lead the work of this session to a successful conclusion.

I should also like to pay tribute to the Director-General of the OPCW, H.E. Fernando Arias, for his dedication and professionalism, and to the Technical Secretariat ("the Secretariat") for its sustained efforts. The Moroccan delegation thanks the Director-General for his comprehensive and informative report to this session, and the Vice-Chairpersons of the Council for their respective reports.

Noting the easing of health restrictions in the Netherlands relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, I wish to commend the Secretariat for the measures it has taken to safeguard the health of the delegations, thereby allowing the work of the OPCW to take place under the best possible conditions.

My delegation fully aligns itself with the statement of the African Group, delivered by the Coordinator H.E. Ambassador Vusimuzi Madonsela, the Permanent Representative of South Africa, and with that of the States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China, delivered by H.E. Ambassador Fikrat Akhundov, the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan.

Morocco reiterates its call for the continuation of capacity-building efforts in the States Parties, particularly in Africa, in order to ensure a balanced and optimal implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention ("the Convention). The emphasis on capacity-building activities will allow the States Parties to comply fully with their obligations under the Convention and to make an effective contribution to the fight against the proliferation of the chemical threat worldwide.

My delegation welcomes the Secretariat's efforts in this regard, especially within the framework of the OPCW Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa ("the Africa



Programme”), which allowed for the maintenance of an appropriate level of training and exchange of good practices, including during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In this connection, Morocco appreciates the depth of the interactions between the Secretariat and the African Group during the consultation of 26 September 2022, in view of the launching of the sixth phase of the Africa Programme, which will cover the period 2023-2025. In this regard, Morocco reiterates its support for this promising initiative launched in 2007, and welcomes the ambitious objectives set for it, be they short or long-term.

Morocco remains confident about the possibility of the establishment of a sixth phase for the Africa Programme, which will capitalise on current achievements and adopt an action plan and objectives that are achievable for the African continent. In this regard, my country would underscore the importance of the following in particular:

- the need to emphasise a tailor-made approach in identifying the needs of the States Parties in the area of chemical safety and security and to provide the most relevant responses, mainly through capacity-building initiatives;
- the promotion of South-South cooperation and knowledge transfer in the area of chemical emergency response;
- capacity building in the States Parties to deal with the serious threat of acquisition of chemical weapons by non-State actors and terrorist groups;
- the continuation of capacity building in African laboratories, and
- the need to secure sustainable and stable funding for the Africa Programme.

Furthermore, Morocco would underscore that priority must be given, among other things, to supporting the capacities of laboratories in Africa, in view of having designated laboratories on the Continent in the near future.

My country reiterates its continuous commitment towards active South-South cooperation to optimally leverage Convention implementation in Africa. In this connection, the Moroccan delegation calls for more coordination among all stakeholders in order to promote the exchange of good practices and mutual capacity building, taking into account the specificities of each State Party and each subregion.

In this connection, Morocco is pleased to note that the Twenty-Fourth Regional Meeting of National Authorities of States Parties to the Convention will soon be held in The Hague, from 22 to 25 November 2022. My delegation remains confident that this meeting will be a significant opportunity for the various representatives to meet, in person, to interact and to exchange the respective experiences and challenges in our countries in terms of Convention implementation.

In the context of its continuous commitment to capacity-building in African States Parties, as well as the sharing of experience and expertise, Morocco is pleased that it will hold, together with the OPCW Secretariat, three important trainings in the last quarter of 2022, namely: (1) a training and education programme for youth on the use of chemistry for peaceful purposes; (2) a basic, in-person course on emergency response to chemical incidents; and (3) chemical incident preparedness for hospitals (HOSPREP).

Along these same lines, Morocco also welcomes the remarkable progress made under the Mentorship/Partnership Programme undertaken with Mauritania, with the support of the OPCW. A first visit by the Mauritanian National Authority already took place in Morocco, while preparations for the second field visit in Mauritania are at an advanced stage. Ultimately, this partnership will lead to the establishment of a subregional mechanism based on the exchange of expertise and the sharing of best practices with a view to strengthening, among others, national implementation measures as well as chemical safety and security.

Morocco expresses, in the strongest terms, its condemnation of the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, under any circumstances, and for whatever reason. To achieve a world forever free from chemical weapons, which remains our common strategic objective, and in light of the current circumstances, my country reiterates its call for the States Parties to continue working in a spirit of unity and to promote constructive dialogue in order to safeguard the norm, to strengthen the unity and integrity of the Organisation, and to preserve its technical nature.

My delegation has taken note of the latest reports of the Director-General and the Declaration Assessment Team concerning Syria, and encourages the continuation of a constructive dialogue between Syria and the Secretariat for the optimal implementation of the provisions of the Convention and the relevant decisions on this subject, and in order to resolve all of the outstanding issues.

My delegation is aware that the threat of use of chemical agents as weapons by non-State actors constitutes a serious danger to the security of the States Parties, and therefore commends the work done within the framework of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism, chaired by H.E. Ambassador Vusimuzi Madonsela, the Permanent Representative of South Africa.

The latest meeting of this Group was an opportunity to gather the views of the States Parties in regard to the scourge of chemical terrorism and the risk of the re-emergence of chemical weapons; these should be reflected in the preparatory process for the Fifth Review Conference scheduled for 2023.

Morocco is pleased with the progress of the work at the Centre for Chemistry and Technology (ChemTech Centre), and remains confident that this future Centre will constitute a hub of excellence for capacity building in all of the States Parties. The stable funding of the ChemTech Centre through the regular budget will demonstrate the joint commitment of the Member States to effectively achieve the objectives of the OPCW.

In this respect, the Moroccan delegation would invite the Secretariat to give priority to African States Parties to benefit from the future work programme at the ChemTech Centre.

The Moroccan delegation notes with satisfaction the participatory and transparent work undertaken by H.E. Ambassador Lauri Kuusing, the Permanent Representative of Estonia, as Chairperson of the Open-Ended Working Group for the Preparation of the Fifth Review Conference.

This is obviously an ambitious and inclusive process that provides all of the States Parties with a great opportunity to discuss the new challenges that we all face, and to ultimately arrive at consensus-based recommendations that will allow us to consolidate our achievements and preserve the unity and effectiveness of the OPCW.

In this regard, the States Parties are called upon to prioritise dialogue and a sense of compromise, in order to achieve the intended goals of this upcoming Review Conference and to mark another milestone in the effective implementation of the provisions of the Convention.

Thank you.

I would ask that this statement be considered as an official document of the 101st Session of the Council.

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