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GHANA

STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR FRANCIS DANTI KOTIA PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA TO THE OPCW AT THE TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES

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

Permit me on behalf of the Ghanaian delegation to commend and congratulate you, H.E. Ambassador Vusimuzi Madonsela, Permanent Representative of the Republic of South Africa to the OPCW, on your election as the Chairperson of the Twenty-Seventh Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention, and to assure you of my delegation's fullest support towards the successful outcome of this Conference.

I wish also to express appreciation to the Chairperson of the Twenty-Sixth Session of the Conference of the States Parties, H.E. Ambassador Bård Ivar Svendsen, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Norway to the OPCW for the efficient manner he steered that session.

My delegation's deepest appreciation also goes to OPCW Director-General Fernando Arias, for his detailed report which provides an overview of the status of the Organisation and the implementation of the Convention. I likewise commend the staff of the Technical Secretariat for their dedication and diligence towards the work of the Organisation.

I would like to reiterate Ghana's commitment to the purpose and object of the Chemical Weapons Convention ("the Convention" and note that the universal validity and implementation of the Convention are essential to achieving the ultimate goal of a world permanently free of chemical weapons and their deployment, thereby enhancing international peace and security. In this regard, my delegation commends the Technical Secretariat for its vigorous and untiring efforts in promoting universal adherence to the Convention within the framework of the action plan on universality. To this end, Ghana calls on States not Party yet to the Convention to ratify or accede to it without further delay or preconditions.

Mr Chairperson the OPCW Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa on the Convention (Africa Programme) would constitute the highlight of this statement. Ghana acknowledges that the objectives of the Africa Programme have been designed to advance the effective implementation of the Convention in Africa. We welcome the report on the activities



of the fifth phase of the Africa Programme and note the achievements made and the conception for the sixth phase of the programme. This has been a product of the coordinated and dedicated efforts of the Technical Secretariat through broad consultations with stakeholders.

Ghana is pleased with the action plan to promote and streamline bilateral cooperation between the OPCW and the African Union Commission for effective delivery of the Africa Programme. While acknowledging the financial constraints of the Secretariat, we reiterate the African Group's call for funding the Africa Programme under the regular budget of the OPCW to ensure its sustainability.

We are aware that sometime in 2023, the sixth phase of the Africa programme would be rolled out. It is our expectation therefore that the sixth phase will derive inspiration from the fifth phase, build on its successes and will be adequately funded.

Considering the requirements of adequate resources for the Organisation's planned activities under its mandate, Ghana supports the Director-General's proposed Draft Revised Programme and Budget for 2023 and encourages all States Parties to support the adoption of the draft budget.

As a beneficiary of the provision of logistics and expertise by the OPCW and the Governments of the United Kingdom, Switzerland and other donors on National Authority for implementation of the Convention, Ghana expresses its appreciation to these friendly countries for their partnerships and assistance, and also commends the OPCW for its continued commitment to the effective implementation of Article XI of the Convention. We are certain that such support to Member States will enable them to meet their obligations under the Convention, and we look forward to a continuous collaboration.

Ghana reaffirms its commitment to the objectives of the Convention by its support for the establishment of the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT), and its mission to hold perpetrators of chemical weapons use accountable. We observe with concern the lack of progress on the work of the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) in Syria and call for serious and productive dialogue between the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and the Technical Secretariat with a view to resolving all outstanding issues with utmost urgency and purpose. Both sides must be willing to make hard and inevitable choices as well as difficult compromises for the mission to move forward to a conclusion since the outstanding issues cannot be held in perpetuity or in abeyance.

Additionally, Ghana is concerned about the threat of the re-emergence of toxic chemicals and the alleged use of chemical weapons, and condemns in the strongest possible terms, the use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anybody, and under any circumstances. We believe all States Parties are under the obligation to work collectively to hold perpetrators accountable in order to end the culture of impunity and to check the emergence of chemical terrorism. It is our belief that the consistent coordination between international organisations and relevant stakeholders is key to creating awareness on chemical security and forging global efforts to prevent chemical terrorism within the framework of the Convention and the Organisation's mandate.

In this regard, let me commend the work of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism chaired by H.E. Ambassador Vusimuzi Philemon Madonsela of the Republic of South Africa and the Sub-Working Group on Non-State Actors for the progress made.

We join calls for greater gender parity and regional balance as well as equitable representation of States Parties at all levels of the Organisation. This, we believe will go a long way to deepen good corporate governance in the Organisation.

In conclusion, Mr Chairperson, I wish to encourage States Parties to be guided by the spirit of engagement, dialogue, and cooperation to ensure full implementation of the Convention, which seeks to free our world of chemical weapons in particular, and in general, weapons of mass destruction.

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

I thank you for your attention.

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