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MOROCCO

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR MOHAMED BASRI
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO TO THE
OPCW AT THE TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE
OF THE STATES PARTIES**

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

Allow me first to warmly congratulate H.E. Ambassador Vusimuzi Philemon Madonsela of South Africa on his election as Chairperson of the Twenty-Seventh Session of the Conference of the States Parties (“the Conference”), and to express to him the full support of the Moroccan delegation. I should also like to congratulate H.E. Ambassador Bård Ivar Svendsen, the Permanent Representative of Norway, for his remarkable work and successful chairpersonship of the Twenty-Sixth Session of this august body.

I should also like to express my gratitude to the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), H.E. Ambassador Fernando Arias, for his relevant and insightful report, and to praise the professionalism and continuous and unwavering commitment of the entire staff of the Technical Secretariat (“the Secretariat”).

My delegation fully aligns itself with the statement of the African Group, delivered by H.E. Ambassador Francis Danti Kotia, the Permanent Representative of Ghana, and with that of the States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China, delivered by H.E. Gaya Mammadov, Head of the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

In line with the strategic vision of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, the Kingdom of Morocco has always demonstrated its steadfast commitment to actively contributing to the worldwide efforts to strengthen the United Nations system for non-proliferation and the fight against weapons of mass destruction, with a view to consolidating peace and security in our region and throughout the world.

As a result, the Kingdom has always unconditionally adhered to the principle of categorically condemning any use of chemical weapons, under any circumstances, while remaining an ardent defender of the use of chemistry for peaceful purposes.

The Kingdom of Morocco reaffirms its unfailing support of the noble objectives of the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”), and reiterates once again, in the strongest



possible terms, its categorical condemnation of the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, under any circumstances, and for whatever reason.

The use of chemical weapons is a grave violation of the provisions of the Convention. The States Parties must act together to strengthen this vital legal instrument, which has allowed for the elimination of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. Likewise, all stakeholders are called upon to work tirelessly to strengthen the Convention and to further consolidate the role of the OPCW to achieve a world free from chemical weapons.

My delegation has taken note of the latest reports of the Director-General and the Declaration Assessment Team concerning the Syrian Arab Republic, 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.

Morocco, which is committed to a balanced and optimal implementation of the Convention, reiterates its call for capacity-building efforts in the States Parties, particularly developing ones, and especially in Africa, in order to allow them to make an effective contribution to the fight against the proliferation of the chemical threat worldwide and to comply fully with their obligations under the Convention.

In this connection, my delegation is pleased with the remarkable results achieved during the fifth phase of the OPCW Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa (“the Africa Programme”), which will be completed in December 2022, and notes with satisfaction the depth of the interactions between the Secretariat and the African Group, in particular during the sixth meeting of the Programme Steering Committee, held on 15 November 2022, in view of setting a promising course for the imminent launch of the sixth phase, which will cover the period 2023 to 2025.

Morocco reiterates its support for this Programme, established in 2007, and welcomes its ambitious objectives, be they short- or long-term. My delegation remains confident about the implementation 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.

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 regard I should like to indicate that Morocco will spare no effort in becoming fully involved in the work intended for Africa. Just this month my country successfully hosted two important exercises, namely, the programme for the Preparation of Hospitals for Chemical Incidents (HOSPREP), as well as the Youth Education and Training Programme on Peaceful Uses of Chemistry. More than 20 participants from dozens of African States Parties took part in each programme.

Concerning laboratory capacities, my delegation believes that the strengthening of analytical capabilities in African laboratories remains essential to improving the response capabilities of African States Parties in cases of chemical incidents or terrorist attacks.

Morocco is therefore 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 Member States of the Organisation. 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.

My delegation is convinced that the ChemTech Centre will play an important role in capacity building in important areas, such as research and data analysis, and training and sharing of knowledge, in particular in pursuit of the objectives of Articles X and XI of the Convention, and in particular for African States Parties.

Further, the Moroccan delegation stresses that priority should be given, among other things, to strengthening capacities of laboratories in Africa, with a view to having designated laboratories on the continent in the near future.

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 Secretariat. 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 is aware of the threat to international peace and security posed by chemical weapons, and its commitment to countering this is reflected in particular by the adoption of the Convention's principles within its national legislation, which has been continuously updated in order to remain in conformity with the latest necessary international standards in this field.

The fight against the risks of chemical terrorism must continue to be at the forefront of our concerns. The use of chemicals as weapons by non-State actors still remains a serious threat. With the support of the Secretariat, the States Parties, and in particular those in Africa, must be in a position to counter this alarming threat.

In this context, my delegation wishes to underscore the importance of the work carried out within the framework of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism, chaired by H.E. Ambassador Vusimuzi Madonsela, the Permanent Representative of South Africa.

My delegation has already submitted the survey prepared by the Secretariat on the fight against chemical terrorism, through which the main national priorities of Morocco were shared, concerning in particular the implementation of a national legal framework on chemical terrorism, threat and risk management, partnerships, as well as future priorities in this area.

Allow me to underscore some of Morocco's priorities in this regard, such as the strengthening of the national legal framework for the fight against chemical terrorism, in particular in Africa, the development of capacity-building programmes, with training and exercises tailored to the competencies and needs of African States Parties, as well as the improvement of customs controls at borders for the identification of chemicals.

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 conclusion, my country calls upon the States Parties to prioritise a sense of dialogue and compromise, in order to allow the OPCW to do more to effectively achieve the noble goals of the Convention, including universality, which remains an objective that must be achieved as soon as possible.

I thank you for your kind attention.

I would ask that this statement be considered as an official document of this session of the Conference.

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