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KENYA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR MARGARET WAMBUI NGUGI SHAVA
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA TO THE
OPCW AT THE FIFTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE
STATES PARTIES TO REVIEW THE OPERATION OF THE CHEMICAL
WEAPONS CONVENTION**

Mr Chairperson,
Mr Director-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

My delegation congratulates H.E. Ambassador Henk Cor van der Kwast, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the OPCW on the election as Chairperson of the Fifth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We have full confidence that under your able leadership, we shall have a successful Conference.

Kenya aligns itself with the statements of the Africa Group of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention delivered by H.E. Mr Francis Danti Kotia, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Ghana, and that of the Non-Aligned Movement and China, which was delivered by H.E. Mr Rahman Mustafayev, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

My delegation appreciates the Director-General, H.E. Mr Fernando Arias, for his statement and reports, and also appreciates his team at the Technical Secretariat for their diligence in the execution of their mandate.

The Fifth Review Conference is an opportunity to collectively take stock of the implementation of the Convention and set out priorities for the next five years. We wish to extend our gratitude to H.E. Ambassador Lauri Kuusing, Permanent Representative of Estonia, and the members of his bureau for guiding us through the preparatory process. The process culminated in a draft provisional text that will be the basis of our discussions on the outcome of this Conference.

Kenya reaffirms its commitment to the obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention. We underscore that the full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of all provisions of the Convention is key to achieving the twin objectives of eliminating the acquisition, use, production, and transfer of chemical weapons, and of advancing the use of chemistry for peaceful purposes, thus contributing to international peace and security as well as the economic and technological development of States Parties. In light of this, we encourage the Organisation



to continue strengthening the implementation of all provisions of the Convention, including Articles VII, X, and XI.

Kenya, a regional port of entry, has to contend with risks emanating from illicit trafficking and mishandling of toxic industrial chemicals in transit. To address these risks the Government is strengthening national measures by elaborating frameworks to govern safety, security, and safeguards in handling of toxic industrial chemicals. Additionally, Kenya, in collaboration with the OPCW, has trained a number of personnel to the level of instructor in emergency response to chemical incidents.

Kenya has in the past suffered terror attacks and incidents involving chemical materials, resulting in fatalities, injuries, environmental pollution, and disruption of social and economic activities. We support efforts by the Organisation to strengthen chemical counterterrorism and the role of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism as a useful forum for promoting dialogue among States Parties and driving actions to further address the challenges posed by chemical terrorism.

Kenya also recognises that a strong customs regime is crucial in ensuring the safety and security of toxic industrial chemicals and other strategic goods both nationally and regionally. In partnership with the OPCW and the World Trade Organization (WTO), Kenya is working towards designating the Kenya School of Revenue Administration to be a regional OPCW designated customs training centre. The school's geographical location in the region, and its infrastructure and human resource capability puts it in good stead to play this role.

In line with meeting Kenya's obligations under the Convention and the United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), among other disarmament and non-proliferation international instruments, the Government of Kenya is working towards the establishment of a centre of excellence for chemical safety and security. The centre of excellence will provide refresher training for personnel to improve their capability to handle and analyse new and emerging toxic industrial chemicals which may pose a threat to national and regional peace and security. In partnership with the OPCW and other development partners, we aim to have the centre established as a regional designated laboratory that has the capacity to analyse chemical warfare agents. Additionally, the centre will play a leading role in capacity building, education and outreach activities that create awareness on toxic industrial chemicals to all stakeholders, and in the creation of a wider pool of trained personnel to safely and securely handle toxic industrial chemicals.

In addition to the national implementation measures already in place, Kenya has consolidated the diverse pieces of legislation relating to the Convention into two comprehensive legislations that will domesticate the Convention. The first is the Strategic Goods Control Bill which has received the cabinet's approval and is awaiting parliamentary consideration. The second is the Government Chemist Authority Bill, which will address the remaining part and thereby ensure full domestication of the Convention. The latter bill is awaiting public participation before being submitted to the cabinet for consideration and approval.

Kenya's participation in the OPCW Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa on the Chemical Weapons Convention has been vastly instrumental in strengthening Kenya's capabilities for implementation of the Convention. This has been in the areas of cross-border control of transfer of scheduled chemicals, countering chemical terrorism, response capabilities

to chemical incidents by first responders, enhancing chemical safety and security management capabilities, as well as upgrading laboratory competencies.

We value the extensive and inclusive consultations undertaken by the Technical Secretariat in the development of the sixth phase of the Africa Programme, whose implementation commenced in January 2023. We encourage continued consultation in the process of its implementation to ensure alignment with States Parties' priorities. We also encourage States Parties and the Technical Secretariat to take measures to mitigate any risks to its successful implementation, including those risks related to human and financial resources. We laud the recent inauguration of the Centre for Chemistry and Technology (ChemTech Centre). We look forward to its operationalisation and contribution to strengthening the Organisation's international cooperation and assistance programmes.

As we work together to ensure the Organisation remains fit for purpose, we support the proposal to establish a working group to develop a strategy for improving geographic representation in the staff establishment of the Organisation. In addition, existing strategies on gender balance in the Organisation should be sharpened in order to foster an enabling environment for women's full, meaningful, and effective participation in the implementation of the Convention by both the Technical Secretariat and States Parties.

Mr Chairperson, as I conclude, we underscore the importance of consensus in supporting the OPCW to execute its mandate, including in the adoption of the outcome document of this Conference. This will not only strengthen the OPCW but will also reaffirm our collective commitment to the high ideals and values of the Convention.

Thank you.

I would like to request that this statement be circulated as an official document of this session and published on the OPCW website.

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