



OPCW

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**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP OF STATES PARTIES
TO THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION AT THE
FIFTEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,

1. On behalf of the African Group, I would like to congratulate you on your election as Chairperson of the Fifteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties. We are confident that you will steer our work to a successful conclusion and we assure you of our full cooperation and support for your efforts.
2. I am also pleased to convey the African Group's appreciation to the outgoing Chairperson, Ambassador Vaidotas Verba of Lithuania, for his commitment and hard work as Chairperson of the Fourteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties.
3. The African Group associates itself with the statement made by Cuba on behalf of the Chairperson of the Non-Aligned Movement and China.
4. We also wish to extend a word of welcome to Ambassador Üzümcü who is attending his first Conference of the States Parties as Director-General and the Group thanks him for his opening statement on the activities of the Organisation.

Mr Chairperson,

5. The African States Parties reiterate their firm conviction that the destruction of all chemical weapons is one of the primary objectives of this Organisation. We have therefore taken note of the destruction efforts undertaken by the possessor States Parties during the past year and we commend them for their efforts and the progress they are making.
6. While the African Group is pleased to acknowledge the progress being made in destroying these weapons, we again have to register our concern at the large quantity of chemical weapons stockpiles that still has to be destroyed with 16 months remaining before the final extended destruction deadline. We once again reiterate our call to the major possessor States Parties to ensure that they complete their destruction programmes within the deadline provided for in the Convention, and in accordance with the decisions of the Eleventh Session of the Conference of the States Parties.



7. A significant development has taken place during the past year in that the Russian Federation has now also joined the United States in indicating that it does not expect to meet its destruction obligations. The African States Parties are concerned about this development and we urge the United States and the Russian Federation to make all possible efforts to complete their destruction activities within the agreed extended deadline.
8. While the African Group continues to hope that all of the possessor States Parties will comply with the final extended destruction deadline, we do not currently have any grounds to believe that the difficulties that we are being forced to confront are symptoms of any bad faith or any attempt to circumvent the basic objective of the Convention (namely the elimination of all chemical weapons). As the Conference of the States Parties responsible for overseeing the implementation of, and adherence to, the Chemical Weapons Convention, we should nevertheless prepare ourselves by laying down the ground rules for dealing with the eventuality that the final extended destruction deadline of the Convention may not be met.
9. In view of this, the Group believes that this Conference should, as it did during its Fourteenth Session, clearly address this matter in its report. For this purpose, sufficient agreed Executive Council report language exists on which the Conference can draw to formulate its views on the following:
 - The importance of maintaining the integrity of the Convention;
 - Preventing any action that would undermine the Convention;
 - Compliance with the extended destruction deadline;
 - The commitment of the major possessor States Parties to complete their destruction activities; and
 - Countering efforts that could lead to rewriting or reinterpreting the Convention's provisions.
10. The Group trusts that other States Parties would once again join our efforts to include wording in the report of the Conference so as to ensure that we protect the integrity of the Convention.
11. The African Group supports the request by Libya to modify the dates of its intermediate destruction deadlines as approved by the Conference of the States Parties at its Fourteenth Session. We believe this request can best be handled by the Conference by amending its decision on this matter, C-14/DEC.3. We look forward to the adoption of the draft decision which the Sixty-Second Session of the Executive Council has recommended to the Conference for its consideration.

Mr Chairperson,

12. African States Parties continue to make good progress in the implementation of their national obligations under the Convention, in particular efforts to implement their national implementation measures. We remain committed to meeting all our obligations in full. Adequate and timely assistance to requesting States Parties remains important, however, in order to fulfil this objective. We look forward to the continued provision of such assistance.

Mr Chairperson,

13. The Second Review Conference urged the Executive Council to reach early agreement on the full implementation of Article XI as well as calling for adequate funding to be made available for capacity building and transfer of skills programmes.
14. The full implementation of Article XI is of particular importance in order to ensure the Convention remains relevant for the majority of States Parties that possess neither chemical weapons nor any substantial chemical industry. By assisting these States Parties in the development of their chemical capacity and industry we in turn greatly enhance their ability to contribute to the maintenance of international and regional peace and security.
15. The African Group is pleased to note the workshop on the implementation of Article XI which took place from 24 to 25 November 2010, in The Hague. We look forward to the outcome of this workshop making a substantive contribution to efforts to develop concrete measures to ensure the promotion of international cooperation in the field of chemical activities through the exchange of scientific and technical information, chemicals, and equipment.

Mr Chairperson,

16. The African Group of States Parties notes with appreciation the extension of the Programme for Africa by the Director-General for another three years. We look forward to continued cooperation with the Technical Secretariat to strengthen the Programme by developing new actions and projects that would contribute directly to capacity building and the transfer of skills to African States Parties as well as assisting them with the implementation of the Convention.
17. We further note with appreciation the voluntary contributions made by some donor States Parties through the Programme for Africa as well as the contributions, including in-kind contributions, which African States Parties continue to make in the implementation of the Programme.

Mr Chairperson,

18. African States Parties attach great value to the implementation of Article X, which provides for assistance and protection to States Parties against chemical weapons. It is important in this regard to ensure practical capacity building as well as the transfer of material and equipment to deal with chemical incidents on a regional and subregional basis. The movement of chemicals across borders in Africa also calls for a responsive Organisation that is able to address a wide range of chemical incidents.
19. It is important that training and assistance programmes of the OPCW continue to focus on establishing or strengthening States Parties' capacity to respond to a chemical attack or incident. The Organisation also needs to ensure that it can adequately respond to requests from African States Parties.
20. African States Parties note with satisfaction the successful conclusion of the exercise on the delivery of assistance—ASSISTEX 3—which took place from 11 to

15 October 2010 in Tunis, Tunisia. We extend our appreciation to the host country Tunisia for undertaking this important task and commend the Tunisian authorities for the professional manner in which the exercise was hosted. The Group further extends its appreciation to all participating States Parties as well as the Technical Secretariat and other organisations that contributed to the successful conclusion of ASSISTEX 3.

Mr Chairperson,

21. The threat of global terrorism which confronts us gives added urgency to the work of our Organisation. The African States Parties believe that the contribution to global anti-terrorism efforts in the context of the Convention can be best achieved by the full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of all provisions of the Convention. The OPCW has a particular role to play among international organisations in preventing access to chemical weapons by non-State actors and by providing assistance in the event of a chemical attack. In this framework, the implementation of Article X is of particular importance.
22. The Group also wish to highlight the significance of international cooperation in the context of the Convention, in preventing terrorists from acquiring and/or using chemical weapons and welcome all positive collaboration and cooperation between the OPCW, States Parties, and regional centres for counter-terrorism, such as the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism in Algiers.
23. The African Group is of the view that the work of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism should be seen in this perspective and should avoid a selective approach by only addressing some of the articles of the Convention and not others. We need to be mindful that the obligation to implement the Convention has its origin in the Convention itself and not in any extraneous resolution or law. We recall that the Second Review Conference set clear parameters for the OPCW's role in global anti-terrorism efforts by reaffirming the independent and autonomous nature of the OPCW as a disarmament and peaceful use organisation.

Mr Chairperson,

24. The African Group looks forward to the successful conclusion of the consultations on the 2011 draft programme and Budget for the Organisation during the course of the Conference. We are pleased to note that additional, even if only limited, funding has been proposed for the cooperation and assistance activities of the Organisation and African States Parties would be able to join a consensus that preserves this allocation in the Budget. On the issue of the number of annual inspections of other chemical production facilities (OCPFs), the Group is of the view that this matter cannot be effectively addressed in the context of the annual budget consultations. The contentious discussions and debates that accompany this issue during every year's budget consultations have clearly shown that the number of OCPF inspections is not a financial but a technical issue. As such, any solution that might be found during this year's budget consultations will only be temporary in nature.

Mr Chairperson,

25. On the issue of the composition of the staff of the Organisation, we continue to urge the Technical Secretariat to ensure, through its recruitment processes, equitable geographical and gender representation in the professional ranks of the Organisation, particularly in senior and management positions. In this regard, the African States Parties look forward to the adoption by the Conference of the draft decision on the composition of the Technical Secretariat. The annual reports which will be provided on this basis to States Parties on the representation of State Party nationals in professional level positions in the Technical Secretariat will be most helpful in order to focus the Technical Secretariat's recruitment efforts to address under representation.

Mr Chairperson,

26. The African States Parties have noted with interest the initiative of the Director-General to set up a panel of eminent experts in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation to formulate recommendations on the future priorities of the Organisation once destruction efforts wind down. The African Group looks forward to receiving more information on this initiative, including efforts to ensure that the full range of States Parties interests is represented on the panel. We are also hopeful that the outcome of the panel's work will positively contribute to the discussions among the States Parties on the future priorities of the Organisation.
27. We would like to request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Fifteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties.

Thank you.

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