

SOUTH AFRICAN EMBASSY

40 Wassenaarseweg,
2596 CJ The Hague

FAX NUMBER: 070-3460669

TELEPHONE NUMBER: 070-3924501

WEBSITE ADDRESS: www.southafrica.nl



ZUID-AFRIKAANSE AMBASSADE

Wassenaarseweg 40,
2596 CJ Den Haag

FAX NUMMER: 070-3460669

TELEFOON NUMMER: 070-3924501

STATEMENT BY MR XOLISA MABHONGO

**CHIEF DIRECTOR: UNITED NATIONS (POLITICAL)
SOUTH AFRICAN DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 2nd REVIEW CONFERENCE
OF THE
CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION**

8 APRIL 2008

Mr. Chairperson,

The South African delegation would like to congratulate you on your election as Chairperson of the Second Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention. I would like to assure you of our full cooperation and support for your efforts to guide this meeting's work to a successful conclusion.

Our congratulations and gratitude are also extended to the Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group on the Preparation of the Review Conference, His Excellency, Ambassador Lyn Parker of the United Kingdom, for his leadership and contribution to the planning and preparations for this Conference.

We also wish to commend the Director-General, Ambassador Rogelio Pflirter and the staff of the Technical Secretariat, for their invaluable role and support in the months leading up to this Review Conference

Mr. Chairperson,

The South African delegation associates itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Non-aligned Movement and China by the representative of Cuba, as well as with the statement delivered on behalf of the African Group.

The Second Review Conference, at this ten year mark in the history of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, provides the States Parties with an opportunity to review progress made, and to further strengthen the Chemical Weapons Convention as a tool for enhancing international peace and security.

As noted in previous statements today, much has been accomplished in terms of the implementation of the Convention in the past ten years. The membership of the OPCW now stands at 183 State Parties, progress has been made in terms of the destruction of chemical weapons and overall compliance by State Parties, and developing countries have benefited from the assistance and cooperation programmes provided by the OPCW.

Despite these achievements we do however still have much to do in terms of ensuring the full implementation of the Convention. Whether the Convention will mature to achieve its full potential over the next decade will depend on the course we set at this Review Conference.

Mr. Chairperson

My delegation wishes to emphasise the importance of the full implementation of Article XI of the Convention. South Africa sees non-proliferation within the context of an all encompassing development process, which is part of our foreign

policy agenda. Towards this end we have committed ourselves to promoting and supporting the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, with the goal of international peace, stability and security, whilst at the same time also ensuring that control measures do not become means whereby developing countries are denied access to advanced technologies required for their own development. The challenge we are all faced with is to balance genuine security concerns with development objectives, within the context of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

We are of the position that for the full implementation of the Convention to be achieved and for States Parties' continued safety and security, the Convention must remain relevant to all its States Parties. This can only happen if the Convention can become more meaningful and relevant to the majority of its members, whose priority is socio-economic development. We believe the Second Review Conference should provide clear guidance for the development of concrete measures within an agreed framework, so as to ensure the promotion of international cooperation in the field of chemical activities through the exchange of scientific and technical information, chemicals and equipment. The primary objective of these measures should be to assist States Parties in the development of their chemical industrial capacity. To achieve this objective the importance of a steady increase in the amount of regular budget funding allocated for international cooperation cannot be overemphasised

Mr. Chairperson

The full implementation of Article X to provide assistance and protection to States Parties against chemical weapons continues to be of importance for the effective functioning of the CWC and is a matter that is close to the heart of the South African delegation. We would recommend that the current training and assistance programmes of the OPCW be augmented to focus on building or increasing the capacity of States Parties to respond to a chemical attack or incident. We further recommend that the Review Conference also examine the role which regional and sub-regional response mechanisms could play in providing assistance to States Parties.

Mr. Chairperson

Whilst there has been much progress made in terms of the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles, and we commend possessor states for this progress, a lot remains to be done over the next four years if we are to achieve the destruction deadlines. We call upon the possessor states to spare no effort and to commit more resources to their destruction efforts and to implement additional measures to address the challenges they have been facing in this regard.

We look forward to firm commitments from possessor States Parties, in the outcome document of the Review Conference, to intensify their efforts to ensure that they complete their destruction programmes within the deadlines provided for in the Convention and in accordance with the decisions of the 11th session of the Conference of States Parties.

Mr. Chairperson

At this juncture in the history of the Convention we can confidently say that no other process, institution or mechanism in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation has come close to realising, in a similar manner to this Convention, the destruction and prohibition of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. If we are to retain the integrity of this Convention we need to achieve the 2012 destruction deadlines. We also need to ensure that the Convention remains relevant to all States Parties and that the OPCW membership continues to grow.

The South African delegation commits itself to working with the other States Parties to ensure that, through thorough and critical examination of the implementation and progress of the Convention, this Review Conference will guide the Convention to achieve its full potential.

I thank you.