

Madam Chairperson, Director-General, Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

I warmly welcome you, Ambassador Jana Reinišová of the Czech Republic, as Chairperson of this Council. I am confident in your ability to successfully steer the deliberations of the Council and assure you of the full support of my delegation.

I also appreciate Ambassador Sheikh Mohammed Belal of Bangladesh, for his dexterity in chairing this Council during his tenure in the past one year.

My delegation would like to thank the Director General, H.E. Mr Ahmet Üzümcü, for his very informative statement delivered at this session. We salute his excellent accomplishments during his 8-years tenure as Director General, and wish him the best in his future endeavours. We also wish his successor, Ambassador Fernando Arías, a very successful stewardship, as he assumes his duties as Director General on 25 July 2018.

The Nigerian delegation aligns itself with the statement of the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China, which was delivered by H.E. Ms Haifa Aissami Madah, Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the OPCW. The Nigerian delegation also aligns itself with the statement of the African Group, delivered by H.E. Mr Abdelouahab Bellouki, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Morocco.

Madam Chairperson,

The core objective of the Convention is to rid the world of chemical weapons, and ensure that there is no use of toxic chemicals as weapons at any time, by anyone and under any circumstances. Nigeria fully subscribes

to this objective, and pledges to support other states parties and the Technical Secretariat in its full attainment.

With the Organisation approaching the post-disarmament phase, an evolving problem facing states parties is the threat of chemical terrorism by non-state actors. At the first International Conference on Countering Chemical Terrorism, hosted by the OPCW in June 2018, we heard from counter-terrorism experts of the increasing nature of this threat, which should be a worrying state of affairs to all states parties. There is, therefore, the need to work in concert to tackle this scourge. It is in this regard that the Nigerian delegation is grateful to all states parties for the nomination of Ambassador Oji Ngofa as Chairperson of the Open Ended Working Group on Terrorism, which is a good platform for discussions among states parties on strategies to prevent chemical terrorism.

This Council's decision EC-XXVII/DEC.5 (dated 7 December 2001), entitled "*The OPCW's Contribution to Global Anti-Terrorist Efforts*", recognised that "the full and effective implementation of all provisions of the Convention is in itself a contribution to global anti-terrorist efforts", and further stressed that the OPCW's efforts in this regard should focus on five areas: universality; national implementation (Article VII); the destruction of stockpiles (Articles IV and V); non-prohibited activities (Article VI); and the OPCW's response capacity regarding requests for assistance and protection (Article X).

On universality, Nigeria commends the outreach activities undertaken by states parties and the Technical Secretariat aimed at bringing the remaining four (4) states that are not yet parties into the Convention. In this regard, we congratulate the State of Palestine, as newest state party to the CWC and warmly welcome them into the Convention. We urge the remaining states not parties to the CWC to immediately accede to the Convention without preconditions, so as to achieve a world free of chemical weapons.

Nigeria is fully aligned with the view that full implementation of the obligations under Article VII will greatly reduce the threat of chemical terrorism. To this end, we commend the programmes and activities of the Technical Secretariat that assist states parties to fulfil their national implementation obligations. We urge sustenance of them in a targeted manner, which addresses the peculiar needs of the States Parties.

We commend the Director General for the establishment of the Rapid Response and Assistance Mission (RRAM), which has helped to improve the response capacity of the OPCW regarding requests for assistance and protection. We urge states parties with the means to contribute logistics and funds to this Mission, to ensure its rapid deployment in times of need.

It is important to keep in mind that states parties are at varying stages of development, and some may lack the capacity to properly monitor the transfer, trade and transportation of scheduled chemicals or other dual use chemicals. Nigeria, therefore, looks forward to a continuation of the various capacity building programmes, including the Africa Programme, which would help to prevent toxic chemicals falling into the wrong hands, thereby constituting a threat to states parties.

We wish to also commend the Technical Secretariat for the draft checklist of implementation milestones recently presented at the African Regional Meeting of National Authorities, held in Marrakesh, Morocco. The checklist, when adopted, will further enhance implementation of the Convention by the States Parties, and provide a universal basis for assessment of National Authorities.

Nigeria stands ready to work with other states parties and the Technical Secretariat towards a full and effective implementation of the Convention on the African continent and worldwide. We urge all states parties to engage in good faith dialogue on all issues, and look forward to robust debates at the Fourth Review Conference later this year.

I request that this statement be circulated as an official document of this Session and posted on the External Server of the OPCW.

Thank you for your attention.