



Statement by AFRiCSIS to Twenty-Third Conference of States Parties and the Fourth Review Conference of The Chemical Weapons Convention

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Mr. Chairman, Mr. Director-General, Your Excellencies, Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen:

The mission of AFRICISIS is twofold: first, to help African states comply with international treaties and conventions to stop the spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and second, to promote safe and peaceful uses of nuclear, biological, and chemical technologies. We are a Public Policy Research, Analysis, and Engagement Organization with offices in Ghana and Cameroon, and we have operated since 2012. AFRICISIS makes use of a global network of multi-sectoral partnerships to assess security threats, identify implementation challenges, reflect on regional approaches, and to build the human capacities and capabilities vital for governments to understand and make informed choices about safety and security issues of domestic and international concern.

AFRICISIS welcomes the opportunity to speak to the CWC States Parties, and we would like to emphasize our commitment to working with any government, from whatever region, that expresses interest in our services. We extend our congratulations to you, H.E. Agustín Vásquez Gómez of El Salvador, as Chair of the Fourth Review Conference. We look forward to excellent co-operation with you alongside our potential engagement with the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW.

Mr. Chairman, it is worth considering why we are here.

When determining the direction that the CWC will take in the future, a look to the past can provide important insights. We all share a common goal of eliminating completely the possible use of chemical weapons without crippling our ability to attain economic and technological advances in legitimate fields of chemistry. We highlight the following issues for the Conference's attention: implementation, security, universality.

National Implementation

Mr. Chairman, words on the page, or even the norms embedded in the Convention itself, mean little unless we take the necessary steps to not only enact them, but also to sustain them. A basic obligation of membership in the OPCW is for each State Party to take the steps necessary to implement the Convention on its own territory -- and yet dozens of African States Parties face significant challenges in adopting the Convention.

As of July 2017, only thirty-two of fifty-two States Parties had measures in place to ensure timely implementation of the protocols of the Convention in Africa. Seven additional States Parties had adopted

legislation that would put initial measures in place, while twenty States Parties had yet to adopt any legislation at all. Moreover, fifteen States Parties had not made any Article VII(5) submission and twenty-one States Parties had drafted legislation and were awaiting approval by the relevant governmental entities. Two States Parties, Eritrea and Somalia, had not yet begun to draft legislation.

This raises the troubling possibility of a lack of implementation of the Convention by States Parties in Africa. A further challenge is that many States Parties with legislation and implementation measures in place lack the national authorities with the essential financial and human resources necessary to monitor the appropriate implementation of the Convention. We must work together to ensure long-term cooperation among national and international actors in order to assist States Parties that do not have the means to adopt national implementation measures as comprehensively and expediently as possible.

Mr. Chairman, AFRICSIS is engaged in this very process, in co-operation with VERTIC, friendly States and other civil society actors. During the course of the Fourth Review Conference, AFRICSIS is organising a panel discussion on *Strengthening National Implementation of the CWC in Africa*. This site meeting will bring together scores of diplomats, practitioners, and experts from government, industry, research and academic organizations. A major objective of the meeting is to highlight Africa-specific issues, share lessons learned, foster networking among CWC community members, and share ideas about how to strengthen national implementation. AFRICSIS is deeply grateful to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, without whose financial support our proposal to hold this meeting would not be possible.

Chemical Security

Mr. Chair, while we rely on chemicals—from plastics to agriculture to medicines—to improve our lives, the possibility that terrorists may carry out attacks using hazardous and dual-use chemicals that have toxic effects on people, animals, plants, and the environment remains a legitimate global security concern. To this end, it is essential to properly secure precursor chemicals in order to prevent access to them by unauthorized users. Poor chemical security is a threat to global peace and stability. The general lax security environment in Africa, along with its political instability, makes misuse of chemical agents more likely in the region than in many other places.

AFRICSIS is pleased to inform you of our effort in promoting chemical security and in particular in preventing the likelihood of chemical terrorism in the continent. Our chemical security program focuses on analyzing contemporary security issues, strengthening the capacity of chemical experts, and fostering a culture of knowledge sharing.

As part of our activities, we are committed to helping scientists and researchers improve their abilities to safely and responsibly handle chemicals to reduce their potential negative impacts. The global need for chemical risk management tools to help mitigate the proliferation of chemical weapons and controlled chemicals. In 2017, AFRICSIS partnered with CRDF Global in the United States of America and University of Port Harcourt in Nigeria and selected two professors who received training in Kenya on how to establish safe and efficient chemical supply chains and basic chemical management practices. In early 2018, building on the knowledge and training materials received during the Kenya train-the-trainer workshop, the University of Port Harcourt organized a peer-training workshop for Nigerian governments and chemical companies to promote public/private collaboration with regard to the secure management of chemical supply chains, including coordinating national frameworks, procuring necessary equipment, and promoting cross-sector cooperation.

AFRICSIS and the university of Port Harcourt are deeply grateful to the CRDF Global and the United States' Department of State, without whose financial support our aim to establish a regional network of chemical security experts to train local chemical security stakeholders would not be possible.

Implementing the Convention improves national, regional, and international security. By eliminating chemical weapons and carefully monitoring the production and transfer of chemicals that could be misused, the threat of their hostile use is dramatically reduced.

Universality

Mr. Chairman, increasing OPCW memberships in Africa is a step toward achieving complete universality. In 2015, Angola acceded to the Convention, and today, 193 States have committed to the CWC, making it the world's most successful international disarmament treaty for eliminating an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. On 25 August 2017, the Council of Ministers of the Republic of South Sudan approved membership in the OPCW. On 1 December 2017, during the 22nd Conference of States Parties in The Hague, South Sudan announced that it had “all but concluded the process of joining the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)”. When South Sudan finally deposits its instrument of accession with the Convention depository, it will be another significant achievement toward global peace and security. Thereafter, Egypt will be the lone CWC outlier in Africa. Significantly, the Convention will be nearly universal in the continent, which is a testament to the continent's commitment to ensure that the misuse of dangerous chemicals never occurs in Africa or anywhere else in the world.

AFRICISIS continue to raise awareness about the security and economic benefits of OPCW membership and encourage South Sudan to unite with the rest of the world in eliminating all chemical weapons in perpetuity. We continue to analyze and share information that encourages non-States Parties to accede to the Convention, thereby reinforcing the African Union's call for CWC universality in the continent, a call that was underscored by the 2006 Memorandum of Understanding on Co-Operation between the Commission of the African Union and the Technical Secretariat of OPCW. We hope all States Parties will continue to urge the other nations that have yet to join the Convention – Egypt, Israel and North Korea – to join without further delay.

Mr. Chairman let us aim together to achieve complete universality by the 2023 Review Conference that will underpin the achievement of a comprehensive, verifiable ban on chemical weapons. Universality consolidates the international norm prohibiting chemical weapons, reinforces the Convention as a confidence-building measure, prevents proliferation, and helps deny access to chemical weapons by non-State actors.

In conclusion, I hope that some of the activities that I have just described clearly demonstrate how such a commitment can be achieved.

Thank you, and I wish for this statement to be made part of the final 23rd Conference of States Parties and 4th Review Conference's record and posted on the [OPCW external server and](#) website.