



**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR VB KOLOANE ON BEHALF OF SOUTH AFRICA
ON THE OCCASION OF THE GENERAL DEBATE FOR THE
FOURTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES TO
REVIEW THE OPERATION OF THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION
(FOURTH REVIEW CONFERENCE)
23 NOVEMBER 2018**

Chairperson,

Director-General,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. South Africa congratulates you Ambassador Vasquez-Gomez on your election as Chairperson of the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. As you have already indicated, South Africa's confidence that you will steer our work towards a successful conclusion has been confirmed and we assure you of our full cooperation and support in your efforts.
2. South Africa further welcomes the Director-General, H.E Ambassador Fernando Arias-Gonzalez on participating in his first regular CSP and Review Conference since his appointment as head of the OPCW and has no doubt that under his leadership this organisation will deliver on the provisions of the CWC. We are

certain that he will work hard to restore the consensus culture which had become the trademark of this organization. South Africa assures you of her support in all your endeavours.

3. South Africa would further like to express its appreciation for the hard work undertaken by his H.E. Ambassador Puja of Indonesia as Chair of the Open-Ended Working Group for the Preparation of the Fourth Review Conference and acknowledge his dedication which culminated in the Draft Provisional Text of this Fourth Review Conference and commend all State Parties for their contributions.
4. South Africa associates itself with the statement delivered by the Ambassador of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Ambassador Haifa Aissami Madah on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and China and with the statement delivered by the Ambassador of Morocco, Ambassador Belouki, on behalf of the Africa Group.
5. South Africa also takes note of the Opening Statement by the Director-General (DG) of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on its activities and wishes to express its appreciation for the professional manner in which he continues to manage the affairs of the Organization. We are confident that with his leadership he will effectively direct this Organization and we pledge our full support and cooperation to him to maintain the important role of the OPCW in contributing towards global peace and security.

Mr. Chairperson,

6. We note with regret that the Programme and Budget for 2019 was adopted through a vote and not by consensus, clearly indicating the new culture which has lately become the defining trait of this organisation. Furthermore, State Parties no longer engage or talk to each other but engage through the Technical

Secretariat by repeatedly calling on the Director Legal to intervene on matters of substance. South Africa calls on all State Parties to restore the consensus culture which earned this organisation the Nobel Peace Prize in 2013.

7. The adoption of the decision to empower the DG of the OPCW to set up the Attribution Mechanism during the Special Session of the CSP in June 2018 has clearly had a divisive effect amongst State Parties to the CWC. Now that the Mechanism and its funding have been adopted, through various decisions during the CSP on the Programme and Budget for 2019, we have to ensure that its implementation does not further exacerbate an already extremely polarised environment. We encourage the TS to ensure the objectivity, professionalism, and impartiality in its operations. In this regard, we urge the DG to ensure that the composition of the Mechanism team will take into account equitable geographical and gender representation, and to desist any attempts by anyone to politicize its operations as that may not only bring into disrepute the credibility of the work of the Mechanism, but will further negatively dent the image and integrity of the OPCW.
8. Accordingly, South Africa calls on all State Parties to engage constructively during the intersessional period to explore practical ways of restoring the most valued culture of consensus in the OPCW.
9. South Africa welcomes the fact that since the Third Review Conference, five new States have become States Parties to the Convention, namely the Federal Republic of Somalia, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Union of Myanmar, the Republic of Angola, and the State of Palestine, making this Convention one of the most universally ratified treaties. Only four States still remain outside this important instrument and we call upon them to accede to the CWC without any pre-conditions and hope that universality will be reached sooner, rather than later.

10. As the international community stands in opposition to the use or threat of use of chemical weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and as the international community strives to achieve the ideals of the Convention, it is imperative that those few States that continue to remain outsiders to the Convention should join the CWC without further delay. This is especially the case with those non-States Parties that find themselves in regions that are plagued by conflict.
11. We commend the TS on the completion of the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles in Iraq, Libya and Syria. Furthermore, we note with appreciation the complete destruction of the massive Russian stockpiles in line with their commitment date.
12. In this spirit, we urge the only remaining state, the United States of America, to also complete the destruction of its declared stockpile in line with its commitment date of 2023.
13. Also, we encourage the Syrian Arab Republic and the TS to resolve all outstanding matters in relation to the Syrian Declaration.
14. We cannot help to note that the just completed Twenty Third meeting of the Conference of States Parties has been overshadowed by divergent geopolitical interests and the pursuing of national, rather than collective interests.
15. We need to remind ourselves that despite the geopolitical winds that are battering the OPCW at the moment, the CWC not only remains a cornerstone of the maintenance of international and regional peace and security, but is also one of the most successful disarmament treaties.
16. We recall with some sense of nostalgia, the times when decisions were made by consensus and it was not necessary to resort to making use of a divisive voting

process. This is probably a manifestation of attempts to undermine the globally accepted institutions of multilateral diplomacy. We call on all State Parties to adhere to the principles of our fore-bearers and maintain the global norm for the sake of all mankind, irrespective of their economic size or political might.

17. South Africa wishes to reiterate its commitment to multilateralism and the international rule of law, as well as the collective efforts to reach consensus, although it may be difficult to achieve, in order to take us forward to the achievement of the objectives of the Convention.

18. South Africa believes that the CWC remains the only multilaterally negotiated, non-discriminatory and internationally verifiable instrument for the destruction of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. The OPCW must therefore continue to act without fear or favour in achieving the objectives that have been set by its negotiators and by the States that have taken the honourable step to become its States Parties.

19. No cause can ever justify the use of any weapon of mass destruction by any actor, anywhere and under any circumstances. We therefore strongly oppose any use of chemical weapons and are fully committed to our international obligations as a State Party to the Chemical Weapons Convention. The use of chemical weapons undermines the international norm against the production, use and stockpiling of chemical weapons established under the CWC, and we call upon all State Parties to desist from so doing.

20. It is therefore imperative that States Parties must continue to have confidence in the OPCW's impartiality as the only technically competent international authority in its area of work and that there should be no political interference in its work. CWC States Parties should unite in preserving the international norm against chemical weapons and strict adherence to the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention and its consistent and non-discriminatory implementation.

21. South Africa therefore stresses the need to prevent any politicization of any multilateral instrument; as well as the commitment to hold States Parties accountable for any non-compliance with their obligations, based on incontrovertible evidence gathered by credible and competent authorities, such as the Fact Finding Mission of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

Finally, Mr Chairperson,

22. South Africa looks forward to a Review Conference that looks at the review of the operation of the CWC, in particular, the role of the CWC in enhancing international peace and security and ensuring the universality and implementation of the CWC.

23. South Africa commends all capacity building and training offered through the Africa Programme with OPCW support, which has allowed South Africa and other African countries to gain expertise in the field of chemistry as well as on Article X. South Africa welcomes as a matter of priority the discussions on the Fifth Phase of the Africa Programme, and advocates that it be funded from the regular budget of the organisation, whilst fully encouraging able State Parties to continue their generous funding of this programme through their voluntary contributions.

24. Furthermore, South Africa calls on State Parties to continue to fulfil their commitment to transfer technology, material and equipment for peaceful purposes in the field of chemistry to ensure that developing countries also share in the benefits of new technologies, in keeping with the provisions of Article XI. It is my great honour to announce that on 30 November 2018 a Dutch laboratory TNO and a South African laboratory Protechnik Laboratories will be signing an MOU given credence to the sterling job driven by the Directorate ICA of promoting laboratory twinnings as part of practically implementing Article XI and

Article VII. We thank Director Hamza and his team as well as the Dutch Government for this exemplary cooperation.

25. On the DG's request for retention of knowledge and expertise in the area of chemical weapons, South Africa supports the proposal that the DG be allowed to continue utilising the existing authorisation for the rehiring of inspectors as per decision (C-22/DEC.14) and the call for the TS to propose a comprehensive tenure policy (vision 2025), with targets that will be reviewed in 2022 through the appropriate Policy Making Organs. We hope the proposal would articulate clearly how issues of training and greater geographical and gender balance would be meaningfully addressed.
26. South Africa looks forward also to the Technical Secretariat achieving a more equitable geographical and balanced gender representation in all staffing levels and the increased access to internship and Junior Professional Officer Programmes for candidates from developing countries. The importance of continuous capacity building as a cornerstone of achieving the full implementation of the CWC cannot be overstated.
27. Mr Chairperson, South Africa encourages all parties gathered at this august body to proactively engage each other so that we may find concrete solutions to the challenges facing all State Parties in our effort to deliver on the letter and spirit of the Chemical Weapons Convention.
28. In closing, I request that this Statement be circulated as an official document of the Fourth Review Conference and be posted on both the intranet and extranet of the OPCW.

Thank you

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