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MOROCCO

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR ABDELOUAHAB BELLOUKI
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO
TO THE OPCW AT THE FOURTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF
THE STATES PARTIES TO REVIEW THE OPERATION
OF THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION**

Mr Chairperson,
Mr Director-General,
Excellencies,
Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of the delegation of the Kingdom of Morocco, I should like to reiterate my sincere congratulations to you, Mr Chairperson, and to the Chairperson of the Twenty-Third Session of the Conference of the States Parties, Ambassador Yun-Young Lee of South Korea, as well as the Director-General, Ambassador Fernando Arias. I wish all of you much success in your respective missions.

My country applauds the accession of the State of Palestine to the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”), which gives impetus to the process of universalisation, a long-awaited goal of this treaty that is so crucial for the international community. We have no doubt that the State of Palestine will make a constructive contribution to the work of the Organisation and strengthen our common commitment in the fight against the proliferation of chemical weapons.

My delegation welcomes the adoption of the budget of the Organisation for 2019, which will help it to fulfil its obligations. It would have liked so much for this budget to be adopted without a vote.

The Kingdom of Morocco reiterates once again, tirelessly, its strong condemnation of the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, under any circumstances, and for whatever reason. This is a despicable and unjustifiable crime. The States Parties are therefore called upon to work together with determination to further strengthen the role of the Organisation to achieve a world free of chemical weapons.

My country reiterates its unwavering support of the credible actions that will allow the OPCW to fight against impunity, in an impartial and independent manner and on the basis of irrefutable evidence.



My delegation, which is committed to ensuring the credibility of our actions, renews its call for the establishment of an inclusive and independent instrument that acts in conformity with international law and due process, as well as with the fundamental principles of the Convention.

Regarding the destruction of chemical weapons, my delegation welcomes the positive developments in this process, and calls for it to continue with a view to ensuring, as soon as possible, the complete destruction of this category of chemical weapons, which remains one of the fundamental pillars of our Organisation.

Concerning the OPCW Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa, my delegation welcomes the progress achieved and the projects put in place for African countries throughout all four phases of the Programme. My delegation greatly hopes that the fifth phase will represent a qualitative leap forward for this Programme that is so crucial for the African continent.

In this connection, Morocco calls for this Programme to be strengthened and upgraded, and underscores the importance of improving coordination between the Technical Secretariat (“the Secretariat”) and African countries to optimise Programme implementation.

Morocco wishes to express once again its gratitude to the countries that have helped and supported this Programme, whose success unquestionably depends on more stable and sustainable financing.

With regard to the fight against chemical terrorism, it should be stressed that the use of chemical substances as weapons by non-State actors should continue to rank highly among the future priorities of the Organisation. The States Parties, in Africa in particular, must, with the help of the Secretariat, acquire the capacities necessary to counter this phenomenon. My delegation welcomes in this regard the establishment of the Rapid Response and Assistance Mission and the organisation of events to strengthen cooperation among all stakeholders.

Aware of the importance of education and outreach activities, my country has organised several workshops, conferences, and trainings aimed at strengthening chemical and biological safety and security, for the benefit of academics, researchers in various disciplines, students, and representatives of civil society.

My delegation commends the work carried out within the framework of the Open-Ended Working Group for the Preparation of the Fourth Review Conference, under the chairmanship of Ambassador I Gusti Agung Wesaka Puja of Indonesia. My delegation hopes that the consultations on the provisional draft text submitted by Mr Puja will come to a successful conclusion, in order to provide the Organisation with a road map that will have a mobilising affect.

In this context, Morocco wishes to emphasise the following points, which are necessary for optimising the implementation of obligations arising from the Convention, namely:

1. the strengthening of the control of transfers of chemicals, in particular dual-use chemicals, in order to prevent non-State actors from having access to them;

2. the development of cooperation at the regional and international level and the strengthening of national capacities in order to support efforts in the area of assistance and protection against chemical weapons, under Article X;
3. the strengthening of the verification regime, in particular to fight against chemical terrorism and to neutralise the *modi operandi* of non-State actors;
4. the exchange of expertise and the strengthening of laboratories' analytical capabilities, and the proposal of trainings that are tailored to the needs of requesting countries, in order to ensure that such capabilities are upgraded;
5. the strengthening of national capacities in terms of prevention against terrorist attacks involving chemical substances; and
6. the establishment of a laboratory assistance programme dedicated to improving the technical competencies of laboratories working in the field of chemical analysis and monitoring.

Because of its commitment to strengthening national and regional capacities in order to surmount the challenges that hinder optimal implementation of the Convention, Morocco has recently hosted the following events:

- (a) The city of Marrakesh hosted, from 29 to 31 October 2018, the Eighteenth Annual Workshop to Coordinate Assistance and Protection and, from 19 to 21 June 2018, the Sixteenth Regional Meeting of National Authorities of States Parties in Africa. That meeting helped to better determine African priorities and to expand our reflection on the ways to strengthen cooperation between the Secretariat and African States Parties.
- (b) At the initiative of the Moroccan Federation of Chemicals and Para-chemicals, and in close cooperation with the International Council of Chemical Associations, Morocco hosted the first African conference for the responsible management of chemicals, in Casablanca on 27 and 28 September 2018. This initiative helped set the foundations for the creation of an African confederation for chemistry.
- (c) With a view to helping to establish active, sustainable, and effective South-South cooperation, the National Authorities of Morocco and Togo, with the support of the Secretariat, launched for the 2018–2019 period a partnership for Convention implementation.

To conclude, my country calls on States Parties to ensure that the principles of dialogue and consensus prevail, in order to champion the unity of the Organisation in good faith and to work resolutely together to achieve the noble objectives of the Convention.

I thank you for your kind attention, and would ask that this statement be considered as an official document of the Fourth Review Conference.

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