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NIGERIA

**STATEMENT BY MR GABRIEL TANIMU ADUDA
OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA
AT THE NINETY-FIRST SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,
Director-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

I warmly welcome Ambassador Andrea Perugini of Italy as Chairperson of the Executive Council (“the Council”). My delegation has full confidence in your competencies and I wish to assure you of our full support as you guide the activities of this Council over the next one year.

May I also appreciate the Director-General, H.E. Mr Fernando Arias, for his very informative and comprehensive statement delivered at this session. We assure him of our continuous support as he leads our Organisation into the post-disarmament phase.

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. The Nigerian delegation also aligns itself with the statement of the African Group, delivered by H.E. Mr. Kamal Bashir Ahmed, Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Sudan and Chair of the African Group

Nigeria attaches great importance to the complete and verifiable destruction of all chemical weapons stockpiles, including old and abandoned chemical weapons (ACWs), as well as the prevention of their re-emergence. We note the various reports of the Director-General to this Council detailing the progress in their destruction and call on affected states parties to continue in an expeditious manner.

In this regard, our delegation welcomes the April 2019 visit of the Council to the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant, in the United States of America, where they got first-hand experience of the chemical weapons destruction process in that state party. We welcome also, the invitation by China and Japan to the Council for a visit to the Haerbaling ACW destruction site, scheduled for September 2019. We urge continuous cooperation between these states parties and the Technical Secretariat to see to the complete and verifiable destruction of all chemical weapons and ACWs.



Nigeria welcomes the convening of the twentieth and twenty-first rounds of consultations under the structured dialogue between the Syrian Arab Republic and the Technical Secretariat's ("the Secretariat") Declarations Assessment Team (DAT). We look forward to fruitful cooperation in order to clarify and resolve all outstanding issues with the initial declaration and subsequent submissions of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Nigeria notes with concern the differences of opinion among states parties on the competence of the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT). This difference in opinion, if not resolved, could hamper the work of the DAT and possibly the entire organisation. Nigeria urges dialogue among states parties to clarify ambiguities and legal uncertainties concerning the interpretation of the Chemical Weapons Convention ("the Convention"), in accordance with Article XIV of the Convention and the Charter of the United Nations.

We welcome the increasing interest by states parties in electronic submission of declarations, and other verification related activities. We believe that various capacity building exercises carried out by the Secretariat has been an important reason for the increased interest. We urge an expansion of efforts by the Secretariat to ensure that declarations by states parties are made in an efficient, confidential, and timely manner.

Nigeria commends the programmes and activities of the Secretariat relating to the full implementation of Articles VII, X, and XI, and the various facilitators for their efforts at achieving better implementation of these Articles. Nigeria welcomes, particularly, the recent convening of the Fourth Review & Evaluation Workshop of the Components of an Agreed Framework for the Full Implementation of Article XI, held on 1 July 2019 in this room. We note with concern however, that more than two decades after the entry into force of the Convention, Article XI implementation is still in its infancy. We, therefore, call on States Parties and the Secretariat to allocate more funds and design targeted programmes to achieve full implementation of this Article.

Nigeria believes that the OPCW requires a competent workforce, and re-affirms that recruitment into the organisation must take this into account as a primary criterion. Diversity of staff from all regional groups is another important condition to observe. In this regard, we note, with deep concern, the very low number of Africans employed by the Organisation, as reflected in the Director-General's annual report on the composition of the Secretariat (EC-91/DG.9, dated 29 May 2019). Whilst it may be possible that our country and region may not have an abundance of skills in certain aspects of the Organisation's work due to the historical fact, that we never produced or stockpiled chemical weapons, we certainly possess competencies in many other areas relevant to the Secretariat. We, therefore, reiterate our call on the Secretariat to ensure equitable geographical balance in the staff recruitment of the Organisation.

In this regard, we note the non-paper on Workforce Management circulated by the Secretariat. We commend the discussions amongst states parties, under the facilitation established at the Ninetieth Session of the Council, to consider, amongst other issues, an appropriate mode of reviewing the recruitment policy of the Organisation. We trust that states Parties would ultimately arrive at a decision that is fair and balanced, to address the necessity for inclusion and diversity in the Secretariat's workforce. We strongly support the proposal by the NAM CWC States Parties and China for the establishment of an Open-Ended Working

Group to discuss issues that can attract consensus among the states parties and express the hope that this Council strongly consider the establishment of the OEWG.

In conclusion, Mr Chairperson, Nigeria commends the co-facilitators, Ambassador Vásquez Gómez of El-Salvador and Ambassador Puja of Indonesia for all their efforts in guiding this process.

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.

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