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MOROCCO

**STATEMENT BY MR ABDELKADER ABIDINE, MINISTER COUNSELLOR,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATION OF THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO
TO THE OPCW AT THE NINETY-FIRST SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

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

I should first like to congratulate Ambassador Andrea Perugini of Italy for his election as Chairperson of this august Executive Council ("the Council"). I assure you of the full trust and support of my delegation, so that our work can be brought to a conclusion in an atmosphere of consensus and calm.

I am also pleased to commend the outgoing Chairperson, Ambassador Jana Reinišová of the Czech Republic, for the professional and human qualities she displayed throughout her tenure as Chairperson.

My delegation wishes to reiterate its support to the Director-General of the OPCW, Mr Fernando Arias, and to the staff of the Technical Secretariat ("the Secretariat") for their professionalism, skill, and dedication.

My country fully aligns itself with the statement of the African Group delivered by Ambassador Kamal Bashir Ahmed Mohamed Khair of the Sudan, and with that of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement and China, delivered by Ambassador Haifa Aissami Madah of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Morocco reiterates, once again, its strong condemnation of the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, under any circumstances, and for whatever reason. The States Parties are therefore called upon to take the necessary action and measures to protect the norm against chemical weapons from erosion and to put an end to the use of such weapons in the world.

My delegation has taken note of the latest reports of the Declaration Assessment Team as well as those regarding the ongoing consultations. Nothing with pleasure the verified and complete destruction of chemical weapons production facilities declared by the Syrian Arab Republic, my country encourages continued dialogue between that State Party and the Secretariat to ensure optimal implementation of the provisions of the Chemical Weapons



Convention ("the Convention") and the decisions related to this matter, as well as to resolve all of the questions that remain unanswered.

Morocco welcomes the activities undertaken by the Secretariat to support capacity building within the framework of the fourth phase of the OPCW Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa ("the OPCW Africa Programme"). My delegation would underscore in this regard the importance of the Seventeenth Regional Meeting of National Authorities, held in June in Addis Ababa, for the design of the fifth phase of the OPCW Africa programme, based on the evaluations and recommendations of African countries.

It is important to stress the relevance of a thorough evaluation of the OPCW Africa Programme that takes into account the realities on the ground in each State Party, which would help the beneficiaries to get the most out of the Programme. In this connection, Morocco would ask that the following aspects be taken into consideration:

- the promotion of coordination through the Steering Committee for the implementation of the OPCW Africa Programme, and the establishment of a system of geographical rotation of the members of that Committee in order to further stimulate the involvement of all African States Parties;
- the strengthening of the Mentorship/Partnership Programme as a driver for South-South cooperation;
- the enhancement of laboratory capacities in terms of human and material resources, which has proved crucial for optimal implementation of the Convention; and
- the establishment of subregional training centres for assistance and protection against chemical weapons.

In this context, Morocco should like to again express its gratitude for the voluntary contributions to the OPCW Africa Programme, but considers nevertheless that its success its success undeniably depends on more stable and sustainable financing.

Against a backdrop in which the terrorist threat continues to exist in several forms, my country welcomes the relevant efforts and activities undertaken by the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism, chaired by Ambassador Oji Ngofa of Nigeria, and by the Sub-Working Group on Non-State Actors, chaired by Ambassador María Teresa Infante of Chile.

It is appropriate to note that African States Parties must, with the support of the Secretariat, build the appropriate capacities to deal decisively with the risk of the use of chemicals as a weapon by non-State actors. My delegation particularly welcomes the establishment of the Rapid Response and Assistance Mission, and encourages the organisation of meetings aimed at promoting coordination among all parties concerned.

The States Parties must undertake, tirelessly, joint efforts to protect the integrity of our Organisation and to strengthen its effective role in the area of chemical non-proliferation and disarmament. In this connection, my delegation calls on States Parties to ensure that a spirit of dialogue and consultation prevails, in order to give the Organisation a more transparent and flexible policy to manage its staff, in a way that ensures its effectiveness and preserves its know-how.

Aware of the need to give our Organisation strategic momentum, my delegation supports the initiative to establish an open-ended working group, co-chaired by Ambassadors Agustín Vásquez Gómez of El Salvador and I Gusti Agung Wesaka Puja of Indonesia. This working group would serve as a platform to establish a cross-cutting dialogue on issues of common interest, with a view to considering a shared vision that will strengthen the unity and dynamism of the OPCW.

Furthermore, my delegation welcomes the organisation of the annual workshop to review and assess the components of an agreed framework for the full implementation of Article XI, in accordance with decision C-16/DEC.10 (dated 1 December 2011). In order to increase the participation and engagement of National Authority representatives and, consequently, the impact of the workshop, it is appropriate to review the planning of future meetings as well as their duration.

At the national level, my country welcomes the cooperation established between the National Authorities of Morocco and Togo within the framework of the 2018 Mentorship/Partnership Programme. This exchange of shared experiences has helped to strengthen the ties between the States Parties of the Sahel subregion and to support the Secretariat's capacity-building efforts in order to achieve the common objectives relating to the implementation of the Convention. In this connection, my country is prepared to cooperate fully with the Secretariat and African States Parties to mutually reinforce subregional capacities.

To conclude, I would like to announce that the city of Casablanca will host, from 12 to 14 November 2019, a forum on the peaceful uses of chemistry, which is aimed at bridging the gap in and sharing knowledge in the area of chemical safety and security. During this forum, particular emphasis will be placed on issues related to security and the promotion of capacity-building programmes.

I thank you for your attention, and would ask that this statement be considered as an official document of the Ninety-First Session of the Executive Council.

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