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NIGERIA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR OJI NYIMENUATE NGOFA
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA
TO THE OPCW AT THE NINETY-SECOND SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

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

I warmly welcome back Ambassador Andrea Perugini of Italy as Chairperson of the Executive Council (“the Council”) and reaffirm the full confidence of my delegation in his competencies. I wish to assure you, Mr Chairperson, of our full support during this session and until the end of your tenure. I also appreciate the Director-General, H.E. Mr Fernando Arias, for his very informative and comprehensive statement delivered at this session.

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 coordinator of the African Group.

Nigeria remains firmly opposed to the possession or use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, and under any circumstances. Hence, the complete and verifiable destruction of all stockpiles, including old and abandoned chemical weapons (ACWs), and prevention of their re-emergence is a top priority for my country. We note the various reports of the Director-General informing this Council about progress made in destruction of declared stockpiles and ACWs. My delegation recalls the visits by the Chairperson and representatives of the Council to the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant in the United States of America, in April 2019, and to the Haerbaling Abandoned Chemical Weapons Destruction Site in China, in September 2019, to witness first-hand the ongoing destruction operations at these sites. Nigeria commends China, Japan, and the United States of America for their efforts, and encourages them to continue fulfilling their Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”) obligations in an expedited manner.

We note the reports of the Director-General regarding the progress in the elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme, including the work of the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) and the Declarations Assessment Team (DAT). We note also the national papers on this subject by the Syrian Arab Republic. We encourage frank and fruitful exchanges between the Syrian Arab Republic and the Technical Secretariat (“the Secretariat”) in order to clarify



and resolve all outstanding issues with the initial declaration and subsequent submissions by the Syrian Arab Republic.

Nigeria is fully committed to the prevention of chemical terrorism and use of toxic chemicals by non-state actors. We believe that this Organisation has an important role to play in this regard, especially in sharing knowledge and best-practices in the manufacture, storage, trade, and transfer of toxic chemicals, as well as strategies towards effective response, investigation and prosecution of perpetrators of chemical terrorism. We commend the programmes and activities of the Secretariat geared towards building the capacities of states parties to adequately monitor toxic chemicals within their borders. In this regard, it is my pleasure to report that the Nigerian National Authority on 17 September 2019 in Kano State, Nigeria, organised a Workshop on Integrated Approach for the Sound Management of Chemicals in Nigeria, which sensitised national stakeholders and industry players on the imperative for safe handling of toxic chemicals throughout their life cycle.

Noting that the proposed OPCW Centre for Chemistry and Technology will contribute to an increase in capacity building activities for the states parties and chemical knowledge retention for the Organisation, my delegation wishes to re-echo the call by the Director-General for states parties who are in a position to do so, to make voluntary contributions to this project. We look forward to the timely completion of this project.

Nigeria commends the Secretariat for the implementation of the Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa (Africa Programme), which is about completing its fourth phase. We commend also, the engagements by the Secretariat with the Permanent Representations and National Authorities of African States Parties in the design of the fifth phase of the programme. We look forward to further engagements with the Secretariat in order to design tailor-made and effective activities for this phase of the programme.

My delegation commends the facilitators of Article VII, Ms Jenny Sharyne Bowie Wilches of Colombia; Article X, Mr Martin Pizinger of Czech Republic; and Article XI, Mr Junaid Sadiq of Pakistan, for their efforts in carrying out consultations during the intercessional period. We look forward to improved implementation of these Articles via these facilitations or future mechanisms that may be adopted by the States Parties. In this regard, we commend the Chairperson of the Council for his proposal to revitalise the facilitation framework, enhance coordination and address issues of importance to States Parties in a non-discriminatory and effective manner. We commend also the facilitators nominated by the Ninetieth Session of the Council, Ambassador Vásquez Gómez of El-Salvador and Ambassador Puja of Indonesia, for their excellent efforts towards reaching consensus on the proposal by the NAM and China Group for the establishment of an Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG). We believe that a vast majority of states parties support this idea of an OEWG to identify and prioritise items on which consensus is achievable among the states parties, and we encourage this Council to strongly consider the establishment of such a mechanism as soon as possible.

Regarding the draft decision for the amendment of the rules of procedure of the Advisory Body on Administrative and Financial Matters (ABAF), and proposed amendment to that draft decision, which are before this Council, Nigeria urges all states parties to engage in constructive dialogue and consultations in order to arrive at a consensual decision that strengthens the ABAF in its independent, advisory role, without severely impairing the ability of some states parties to nominate members into the ABAF.

My delegation has taken note of the draft decision sponsored by a group of states parties proposing that the Council recommend that the aerosolised use of Central Nervous System-acting chemicals is inconsistent with purposes not prohibited under the Convention. We recognise that this draft decision is in line with the advice of the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) on use of these chemicals for riot-control purposes, and hence, understand the good-faith initiative of the sponsoring states parties. However, my delegation observes that there are different views among the states parties on this issue and encourages the co-sponsors to engage in further discussion with all states parties so a consensual decision can be reached, consistent with the object and purpose of the Convention.

May I conclude, Mr Chairperson, by reflecting on the draft decisions relating to the programme and budget of this Organisation. My delegation wishes to warmly commend the co-facilitators, Mr Marcin Kawałowski of Poland and Mr Daniel Baptista of Portugal for their efforts in the facilitation process which led to the two draft decisions before this Council. Nigeria believes that there is merit in transforming to a biennial budget cycle for the OPCW and hopes that the decision can be adopted by consensus. My delegation further believes that there are commendable innovations in the Draft 2020 Programme and Budget, including the proposed special fund for capacity building for laboratories. We note, however, that there exist divergent views regarding certain aspects of the draft budget and express the hope that these differences may be bridged through dialogue and negotiations among the states parties and the Secretariat.

We are not unmindful of the fact that such divergence may stem from varied interpretations of the Convention, especially with regard to the decision arising out of the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties in June 2018. In the interest of humanity and the long-term future of this Organisation, Nigeria reiterates its call on states parties to resolve differences peacefully, through good-faith dialogue, and in accordance with Article XIV of the Convention and the Charter of the United Nations.

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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