



**STATEMENT OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA TO THE TWENTY-FOURTH
SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES TO THE CHEMICAL
WEAPONS CONVENTION, DELIVERED BY MR GABRIEL TANIMU ADUDA, CHAIRMAN,
NATIONAL AUTHORITY ON CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTIONS,
ABUJA, 27 NOVEMBER 2019**

Mr Chairperson,

Director General,

Distinguished delegates,

On behalf of the Nigerian delegation, I wish to congratulate Ambassador Krassimir Kostov of Bulgaria on his election as Chairperson of the Twenty-Fourth Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention. We have full confidence in his ability to steer the deliberations of this session to a successful conclusion, and we assure him of our full cooperation and support. We express appreciation to this Conference for electing Nigeria as a Vice-Chairperson and we congratulate the other Vice-Chairpersons and officers elected to roles of responsibility. In the same vein, may I also express appreciation to the Chairperson of the Twenty-Third Session, H.E. Mr Yun-Young Lee of the Republic of Korea for his dexterity in guiding that session to a successful conclusion.

I appreciate also, the Director-General, Ambassador Fernando Arias, for his informative and comprehensive report delivered at this session and reiterate our support to him as he leads this organisation in its efforts to rid the world of chemical weapons.

The Nigerian delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by H.E. Mr Jafar Huseynzada, of the Republic of Azerbaijan, on behalf of the NAM CWC States Parties and China. We also align with the statement delivered by H.E. Mr Kamal Bashir Ahmed, Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Sudan, on behalf of the African Group.

Mr Chairperson,

I wish to reaffirm Nigeria's strong commitment to the full and effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, including completion of global chemical disarmament, prevention of re-emergence and chemical terrorism, strengthening of the verification regime, and the mutual economic and technological development of states parties.

We express the hope that complete destruction of declared chemical weapon stockpiles would be achieved within the planned completion dates. We also call on affected states parties to expedite efforts towards the complete destruction of all abandoned chemical weapons and urge continuing cooperation with the Secretariat towards achieving that objective. In this regard, we welcome the visits by representatives of the Executive Council and the Director-General to the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant, in Colorado, United States of America, in April 2019, and the Haerbaling Abandoned Chemical Weapons Destruction Facility, in Jilin Province, China, in September 2019. Nigeria commends China, Japan and the United States for their efforts and encourages them to continue to meet their Convention obligations in an expedited manner.

We commend the ongoing dialogue between the Syrian Arab Republic and the Secretariat in order to clarify all outstanding issues, gaps or inconsistencies related to the initial declaration of that State Party, and we look forward to a successful conclusion of the work of the Declarations Assessment Team (DAT). We note the update by the Director-General in his statement on the continuing work of the fact-finding Mission (FFM) and urge the Mission to continue its work in a professional, impartial and efficient manner, even under the very difficult circumstances in which it must work.

Mr Chairperson,

Nigeria considers that the objectives of the CWC cannot be fully achieved until there is universality of the Convention, and in this regard, call on the states not yet party to the CWC to immediately accede to it without preconditions or delay. We commend the Secretariat for positive steps taken within the framework of the action plan for the universality of the Convention and call on all states parties and other

stakeholders to utilise their bilateral or regional influence with the states not yet party, to achieve universality of the Convention.

The Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa is about completing its fourth phase. My delegation acknowledges the exemplary role of the Technical Secretariat, especially the International Cooperation and Assistance Division, for their efforts at designing and implementing targeted programmes for African states parties. We commend especially, the constant liaison between the Secretariat and the African Permanent Representations/National Authorities towards creating relevant activities and we are looking forward to more accomplishments under the fifth phase of this programme. We, however, reiterate our call for the allocation of more funds to this programme within the regular budget of the OPCW.

Mr Chairperson,

In furtherance of our Convention obligations, since the 23rd Session of the Conference, the National Authority of Nigeria has organised two (2) workshops on Chemical Safety and Security in different parts of our country, aimed at sensitizing stakeholders on the proper handling of toxic chemicals during their lifetime. This is with a view to minimizing or eliminating the risk of chemical terrorism within our borders. Nigerian officials have also participated in various OPCW programmes including the Associate Programme, Advanced Proficiency Test Training, Chemical Emergency Response Capacity, Regional Basic Course on Assistance and Protection, etc., which has improved our national capacity in these areas related to the Convention. We have recently developed a National Chemical Emergency Response Plan. Experts from the OPCW are scheduled to join other stakeholders in a review and validation exercise slated for the second week of December 2019 (about 3 weeks from now).

Nigeria considers that the proposed OPCW Centre for Chemistry and Technology is a laudable project which will contribute greatly to technological development and capacity building of states parties. Thus, we wish to commend the states parties and institutions that have contributed or pledged funds towards this project and re-echo the call of the Director General for more contributions from states parties who are able to do so.

Mr Chairperson,

Our delegation has taken note of the Joint Proposal by Canada, The Netherlands and the United States of America, and the proposals by the Russian Federation for technical changes/additions to the schedule of chemicals in the CWC. We commend these states parties for these initiatives, which we view as promoting the effectiveness and relevance of the Convention in the 21st Century. We commend also, the extensive consultations carried out by these states parties on their proposals and we look forward to their adoption by this Conference in a consensual manner.

On the draft 2020 OPCW Programme and Budget which is before this Conference, my delegation regrets that consensus could not be reached by the Executive Council on its adoption. We believe that the interests of all states parties and the long-term future of this organisation are best served in an atmosphere of consensus, especially on sensitive matters like the budget. However, we recognise the imperative for this organisation to have a budget that allows it carry out its functions in an effective manner and express the hope that this Conference would be able to adopt the draft 2020 Programme and Budget by consensus.

In conclusion, Mr Chairperson, my delegation notes that divisions among the states parties on the budget and other issues have arisen largely as a result of the adoption and continuing implementation of decision C-SS-4/DEC.3, adopted at the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties in June 2018. These differences, if unresolved, can seriously hamper the good work of this organisation and we reiterate our call for their urgent resolution through dialogue and mutual consultations, or in accordance with Article XIV of the CWC.

I request that this statement be made an official document of this session and posted on the external server.

Thank you.