



OPCW

Executive Council

Ninety-Fourth Session
7 – 10 July 2020

EC-94/NAT.31
7 July 2020
ENGLISH only

NIGERIA

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

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

At the outset, I would like to recognise the extraordinary situation under which this session of the Council is convened, and express the sympathies of my Government to the international community over the loss of human lives due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We firmly believe that a situation of this magnitude is best tackled when the international community works in concert, especially in multilateral fora. We call on all stakeholders to work in such a manner to defeat the pandemic.

I wish to warmly welcome Ambassador Agustin Vasquez Gomez of El Salvador as Chairperson of the Executive Council (“the Council”) and reaffirm the full confidence of my delegation in his competencies. I wish you, Mr Chairperson, a successful tenure.

May I also appreciate the Director-General, H.E. Ambassador Fernando Arias, for his very informative and comprehensive statement delivered at this session and express the full support of my delegation to him and the entire staff of the Technical Secretariat (“the Secretariat”) for their good work, especially in ensuring that this session of the Council goes ahead.

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. Ambassador Fikrat Akhundov, permanent representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The Nigerian delegation also aligns itself with the statement of the African Group, which I had the honour to deliver.

Nigeria continues to encourage the full and verifiable destruction of all chemical weapons stockpiles, including old and abandoned chemical weapons. We note the various reports of the Director-General to this Council detailing the progress made in this regard and commend the concerned States Parties and the Secretariat for their considerable efforts.

My delegation notes also, the national papers by the Syrian Arab Republic and the reports of the Director-General, related to the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. We urge continued cooperation between the Syrian Arab Republic and the Secretariat,



including the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM), the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) and the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) to clarify all outstanding issues related to the initial declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic, and suspected incidents of use of chemicals as weapons within the country. In this regard, we note the release of the first report of the IIT which is before this Council. We are aware of differences among States Parties relating to the competence of the IIT and reports emanating from it. We urge cooperation among States Parties to ensure that the object and purpose of the CWC, which is the elimination of the use of chemical weapons, is upheld.

Noting the commencement of the Fifth Phase of the Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa (“Africa Programme”) on 1 January 2020, my delegation recalls that it was designed after robust engagement between the Secretariat and the African States Parties. We look forward to its robust implementation, with tangible, measurable outcomes.

We commend the Director-General for his efforts towards ensuring that the design and construction of the proposed OPCW Centre for Chemistry and Technology commences as scheduled. My delegation firmly believes that this centre, when completed, will contribute to an increase in capacity-building activities for States Parties, and chemical knowledge retention for the Organisation. We warmly commend the States Parties, institutions, and the individual who have made voluntary contributions towards this project. We look forward to its timely completion.

My delegation pays tribute to the facilitators of Articles VI, VII, X, and XI for their work in advancing full implementation of the CWC. We express appreciation to the previous co-facilitators on organisational governance issues, Ambassador Agustin Vasquez Gomes of El Salvador and Ambassador I Gusti Agung Wesaka Puja of Indonesia, for all their efforts in that facilitation. We welcome the new co-facilitators, Ambassador Laura Dupuy Lasserre of Uruguay and Ambassador Matthew Neuhaus of Australia, and look forward to robust engagements under their guidance.

Regarding the draft decisions for the amendment of the rules of procedure of the Advisory Body on Administrative and Financial Matters (ABAF), and proposed amendments to that draft decision, Nigeria wishes to reiterate its call on all States Parties to engage in constructive dialogue and consultations in order to arrive at a consensual and inclusive decision that strengthens the ABAF in its independent, advisory role. On the draft decision sponsored by a group of States Parties proposing that the Council recommend that the aerosolised use of central nervous system (CNS)-acting chemicals is inconsistent with law enforcement purposes, we recognise that it 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, we have observed that there are different views among the States Parties on this very technical issue, and we encourage the co-sponsors and states with contrary views to engage in frank and open discussions so that a consensual decision can be reached, consistent with the object and purpose of the Convention.

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.