

GHANA

**STATEMENT BY MR. MOHAMMED HABIB IDRIS, ACTING HEAD OF MISSION AND
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF GHANA TO OPCW AT THE
TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES IN
THE HAGUE, 30TH NOVEMEBR- 1ST DECEMBER, 2020**

**Mr. Chairman,
Director-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,**

At the outset, allow me on behalf of the Ghanaian delegation to commend you, Ambassador Jose Antonio Zabalgoitia Trejo, Permanent Representative of the United Mexican States, for your election as the Chairperson of the Twenty-Fifth Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention, and to assure you of my delegation's support for the successful outcome of this Conference. I wish to also express appreciation to the Chairperson of the Twenty Fourth Session of the Conference of the States Parties, H.E. Mr. Krassimir Kostov, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Bulgaria for the efficient manner he steered that Session.

I wish to also express our gratitude to the Director-General of the OPCW, H.E. Mr Fernando Arias, for his detailed report which gives a clear overview of the status of the Organisation and the implementation of the Convention. We are confident that your efforts will further strengthen the work of the OPCW. Ghana also appreciates the staff of the Technical Secretariat for their innovativeness and adaptability towards ensuring that the work of the Organisation continues, even in these difficult times.

We acknowledge that we are in unprecedented times and express solidarity with the international community as we all continue to work in diverse ways to bring the COVID-19 pandemic under control. We mourn with those who have lost loved ones to the disease and express our deep sympathies.

Mr. Chairperson,

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the African Group by H.E. Ambassador Lawrence Lenayapa, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kenya, as well as the statement delivered on behalf of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention that are Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement and China, by His Excellency, Mr. Fikrat Akhundov, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Ghana reiterates its commitment to the purpose and object of the Chemical Weapons Convention and notes that, the universality of the Convention is essential to achieving the ultimate goal of a world permanently free of chemical weapons and thereby enhancing international peace and security. In this regard, my delegation commends the Technical Secretariat for actively promoting universal adherence to the Convention within the framework of the action plan on universality. Ghana encourages States not Party to the Convention to ratify or accede to it at the earliest without preconditions.

Mr. Chairperson,

Ghana acknowledges that the objectives of the African Programme have been tailored to enhance the effective implementation of the Convention in Africa. We welcome the report on the activities of the Africa Programme in 2020 and note that the progress made in spite of the operational restrictions imposed by the pandemic, has been as a result of the coordinated and dedicated efforts of the Technical Secretariat through consultations with stakeholders. Ghana, therefore, is pleased with the action plan to promote and streamline bilateral cooperation between the OPCW and the African Union Commission for effective delivery of the Africa Programme. While acknowledging the financial constraints of the Secretariat, we reiterate the Africa Group's call for funding the Africa Programme under the regular budget of the OPCW to ensure the sustainability of the programme.

Mr. Chairperson,

It is therefore obvious that the OPCW requires adequate resources in order to continue to carry out the planned activities under its mandate. Accordingly, Ghana supports the Director-General's proposed programme and budget for 2021 and encourages all States Parties to support the adoption of the draft budget.

Ghana, being a beneficiary of the provision of logistics and expertise by the OPCW and the Governments of the United Kingdom and Switzerland, hereby express its appreciation to these friendly countries for their partnerships and assistance and also commends the OPCW for its continued commitment to the effective implementation of Article XI. We are certain that such support to member states will assist them to meet their obligations under the Convention and we look forward to a continuous collaboration to this end.

Mr. Chairperson,

Ghana affirmed its commitment to the objectives of the Convention by its support for the establishment of the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) as well as the first report of the IIT to assist in holding perpetrators of chemical weapons use accountable. Ghana therefore is concerned about the threat of re-emergence of toxic chemicals and the alleged use of chemical weapons, and condemns in the strongest terms, the use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anybody, and under any circumstances. We believe all States Parties are under the obligation to work collectively to hold perpetrators accountable in order to end the culture of impunity.

While there may be disagreements in our efforts to achieve the goals of the Organisation, Ghana is of the view that it is by continuous dialogue and cooperation by all States Parties and with all relevant stakeholders that the OPCW can address its challenges and progress speedily towards the achievement of a world without chemical weapons.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I wish to encourage States Parties to be guided by the spirit of engagement, dialogue, and cooperation, to ensure the full implementation of the Convention for the maintenance of international peace and security.

I thank you for your attention.

I kindly request that this statement be considered as an official document of this Conference and posted on the website and the external server of the OPCW.