



STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA TO
THE OPCW AT THE NINETY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL,
THE HAGUE, 09 -12 MARCH 2021

Chairperson, Your Excellency, Mr Agustín Vásquez Gómez, Ambassador and
Permanent Representative of El Salvador,

Director General Fernando Arias,

Senior members of the Technical Secretariat,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates

I join other speakers in welcoming you back as Chairperson of the Ninety-Sixth Session of the Council. We trust that your leadership will steer this session towards attaining its stated objectives and a successful outcome of its deliberations. In this regard, let me assure you of my delegation's full support and active collaboration.

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by H.E. Ambassador Lawrence Lenayapa of the Republic of Kenya, on behalf of the African Group of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, as well as the statement delivered by H.E. Ambassador Mr Fikrat Akhundov, Permanent Representative of

the Republic of Azerbaijan on behalf of the Members of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China.

My delegation would like to thank the Director-General of the OPCW, H.E. Ambassador Fernando Arias, the Technical Secretariat and the Bureau for their diligent and productive preparatory and substantive engagement towards the success of the work of the Council during their term. In particular, my delegation would also like to thank the OPCW's Covid-19 task team for ensuring that this Session of the Council does sit, in spite of the extraordinary circumstances presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

My delegation would, once again, like to thank the Director-General for his comprehensive report, and his work with the Technical Secretariat for their commitment and efforts at fulfilling the Organization's mandate to implement the Chemical Weapons Convention by supporting States Parties to ensure the destruction of all chemical weapons and eliminating their threat to international peace and security. We welcome further progress achieved in this regard.

Regarding the draft Decision on "Understanding regarding the Aerosolised Use of Central Nervous System Acting Chemicals (CNSAC) for Law Enforcement Purposes", my delegation calls upon all States Parties to engage in broad and inclusive consultations with a view to reaching consensus. Should consensus not be possible delegations could consider invoking the mechanisms and procedures prescribed in the Chemical Weapons Convention to reach an outcome that is both morally and legally binding on all States Parties.

As Chair of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism, my delegation reiterates that continuous discussions and engagements with other international organisations and stakeholders in the global effort to combat the use of chemical weapons and other weapons of mass destruction remain paramount to our global peace and security. In this regard, my delegation reiterates its position that South Africa opposes the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, and under any circumstances, and is fully committed to her international obligations as a State

Party to the Chemical Weapons Convention. My delegation echoes the call to all States that are not yet part of the Convention to join as soon as possible to ensure collective responsibility for creating a safe world; one free of chemical weapons which upholds the international norm against the production, use and stockpiling of chemical weapons established under the Convention.

My delegation commends the progress achieved under the fifth phase of the Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa and looks forward to realising concrete and measurable progress under the fifth phase of this Programme. Given its importance, we reiterate our firm belief that the Programme be funded through the regular budget of the Organisation to ensure its sustainability.

South Africa notes with interest the reports from the facilitators of Articles VI, VII, X, and XI. We place importance on the full implementation of Article XI and its provisions in order to strengthen and accelerate the economic and technological development of States Parties in the developing world, especially after the devastating effects of the COVID 19 pandemic. We encourage appropriate, tailor-made assistance and technical support to States Parties to enable them to enhance their national capacities and capabilities in carrying out their national implementation measures.

My delegation welcomes the report regarding the status of the OPCW Centre for Chemistry and Technology (ChemTech Centre), which, when concluded will strengthen the capabilities of the OPCW and its stakeholders, in responding to the threat of chemical weapons advance international cooperation and assistance in the field of chemistry, and enhance capacity building efforts of States Parties.

We welcome the positive developments that have taken place in the past with respect to improving the gender balance at the higher level within the Organisation, and urge that there be equitable geographic distribution of staff in all levels of the Organisation.

We echo the call that all States Parties should make every effort to achieve consensus in the work of the OPCW. We believe that dialogue and collaboration among all States Parties remain the best mechanism that will assist in the attainment of the aspiration of this Organisation and its Convention.

In closing, we would like to request that this statement be regarded as an official statement of this Session.

I thank you.