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MOROCCO

**STATEMENT BY MR RACHID SEGHROUCHNI
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PERMANENT REPRESENTATION OF THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO TO THE
OPCW AT THE NINETY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,
Mr Director-General,
Excellencies,
Dear colleagues,

The Moroccan delegation appreciates the support provided for the Chairpersonship of Morocco, represented by H.E. Ambassador Abdelouahab Bellouki, and, as a member of the Executive Council (“the Council”), reiterates its strong willingness to work actively with all delegations and with the Technical Secretariat (“the Secretariat”) in order help bring the work of this session to a successful completion.

I wish to praise the dedication and professionalism of the Director-General of the OPCW, Mr Fernando Arias, as well as that of the Technical Secretariat staff. The Moroccan delegation thanks the Director-General for his comprehensive and informative report to this session, as well as the Vice-Chairpersons of the Council for their respective reports.

The Moroccan delegation appreciates the constant and unfailing commitment of the Director-General, Mr Fernando Arias, in implementing the noble objectives of our Organisation during his term, all in spite of the worldwide impact of the COVID-19 impact. My delegation expresses its support for the nomination of Director-General Arias for a second term.

Moreover, I should like to express our appreciation for the Secretariat’s efforts to ensure the good conduct of the work of the Council and the activities of the OPCW, in full respect of the health and safety regulations, thereby minimising the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

My delegation fully aligns itself with the statement of the African Group, delivered by our coordinator H.E. Ambassador Lounès Magramane, the Permanent Representative of Algeria, and with that of the Non-Aligned Movement and China, delivered by H.E. Ambassador Fikrat Akhundov, the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan.

My country reiterates its call for the balanced and optimal implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”). In this context, Morocco underscores in particular the importance of capacity building of the States Parties, particularly developing ones, in order to help them to contribute actively and effectively to the fight against the chemical threat worldwide and to comply fully with their obligations under the Convention.



In this regard, my delegation notes with pleasure the Director-General's report to this session regarding implementation of the fifth phase of the OPCW Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa ("the Africa Programme"). The Africa Programme is critically important to my country, considering the vital role it plays in optimising Convention implementation on the African continent.

My delegation welcomes the significant progress made during the four previous phases of this Programme, and reiterates its strong commitment to cooperating with all stakeholders, while underscoring the importance of mutual capacity building through South-South cooperation which takes into account the specificities of each State Party and each subregion.

My delegation is also pleased with the successful implementation, in spite of the restrictions imposed by the pandemic, of the fifth phase of the Africa Programme, driven in particular by the active commitment of the International Cooperation and Assistance Division, and by the precious support of the Programme Coordinator.

Further, my delegation, while noting the positive momentum of the Africa Programme, considers that the stability and sustainability of the Programme depends on the establishment of a more regular, stable, and sustainable method of financing. In this regard, we renew our gratitude to the donors for their voluntary contributions

Morocco expresses, in the strongest terms, its condemnation of the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, under any circumstances, and for whatever reason. To achieve a world forever free from chemical weapons, which remains our common strategic objective, and in light of the current circumstances, my country reiterates its appeal to the States Parties to continue working in a spirit of unity and to promote constructive dialogue in order to safeguard the norm, to strengthen the unity and integrity of the Organisation, and to preserve its technical nature.

Having taken note of the latest reports of the Declaration Assessment Team, my country encourages the continuation of a constructive dialogue between the Syrian Arab Republic and the Secretariat, for the optimal implementation of the provisions of the Convention and the relevant decisions on this subject, and in order to resolve all of the remaining unanswered questions.

Underscoring the technical nature of our Organisation and the importance of the collective and consensual action by its Member States to definitively achieve the objectives laid down by the Convention, Morocco calls for supporting and strengthening the OPCW's key role in fighting against chemical weapons. Accordingly, my delegation encourages the States Parties to work together to overcome our common challenges.

In this context, I should like to congratulate the Programme and Budget co-facilitators and the Secretariat for their commitment throughout the process of examination which led to the development of a draft decision. My delegation hopes that the informal consultations undertaken in this context will result in the expected consensus around this issue that is crucial to the continuity of the OPCW and to the strengthening of the Convention.

Likewise, my delegation reiterates its support for the consultations led by the co-facilitators, H.E. Ambassador Laura Dupuy Lasserre, the Permanent Representative of Uruguay, and by H.E. Ambassador Matthew Neuhaus, the Permanent Representative of Australia, with a view to reconciling the different points of view on the issues related to organisational governance. The diversity of the governance issues calls for a constructive and inclusive dialogue between the States Parties, with a view to supporting Convention implementation and optimising our

Organisation's operations. While we note with satisfaction the Secretariat's efforts to achieve gender balance among the management at the divisional level, it is necessary to point out that special attention must be paid to the governance challenges within the OPCW, in particular regarding equitable geographical distribution and gender balance among the overall staff of the Organisation.

The threat of the re-emergence of chemical weapons and the threat of non-State actors and chemical terrorism remain a serious cause for concern. These serious threats demonstrate the meaningfulness of the activities undertaken by the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism, chaired by H.E. Ambassador Vusimuzi Madonsela, the Permanent Representative of South Africa, and by the Sub-Working Group on Non-State Actors.

Further, my delegation is delighted with the progress made in the project to upgrade the OPCW Laboratory and Equipment Store to a Centre for Chemistry and Technology (ChemTech Centre). In this regard, the first pillar ceremony on 23 September 2021 was an important milestone towards completion of this innovative project and towards the implementation of programmes at the Centre that will benefit all the States Parties. My delegation welcomes the inclusive exchange of points of view that the Director-General initiated to ensure that the Centre meets the needs of all the States Parties.

To conclude, my delegation extends its heartfelt congratulations and best wishes for success to H.E. Ambassador Vusimuzi Madonsela, the Permanent Representative of South Africa, as Coordinator of the African Group, succeeding H.E. Ambassador Lounès Magramane, the Permanent Representative of Algeria. My delegation thanks him for the excellent work accomplished throughout his term as Coordinator of the African Group.

I would ask that this statement be considered as an official document of the Ninety-Eighth Session of the Council and that it be published on the external server and the public website of the OPCW.

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