



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Twenty-Sixth Session
29 November – 3 December 2021

C-26/NAT.53
29 November 2021
ENGLISH and FRENCH only

ALGERIA

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA TO THE OPCW AT THE TWENTY-SIXTH SESSION OF
THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,
Mr Director-General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I should like to begin by extending my sincere congratulations to H.E. Ambassador Bård Ivar Svendsen of Norway on his election as Chairperson of the Twenty-Sixth Session of the Conference of the States Parties (“the Conference”).

On behalf of my country, a Vice-Chairperson of this session, I wish to assure you of my full support and that of the Algerian delegation, and of our total willingness to actively contribute to our common efforts to ensure the success of our work.

I cannot forget to acknowledge H.E. Ambassador José Antonio Zabalgaitia Trejo of Mexico for the mission he has just completed with great skill, patience, and dedication. Please accept our thanks.

I should also like to extend my warm congratulations to the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), Ambassador Fernando Arias, and thank him for his statement and the unfailing work he has carried out with diligence and commitment in order to accomplish his important duties and allow the Organisation to fulfil its mandate.

The Algerian delegation takes this opportunity to reiterate its support of the nomination of Mr Fernando Arias as Director-General of the Organisation for a second term of four years.

My thanks also go out to the members of the Technical Secretariat (“the Secretariat”) who, despite the exceptional circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, have continued to work with their usual efficiency to organise this Conference.

The Algerian delegation fully aligns itself with the statements made by H.E. Mr Fikrat Akhundov, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the OPCW, on behalf of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement and China, and with that of H.E. Ambassador Vusumuzi Philemon Madonsela, the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the OCPW, on behalf of the African Group.



Let me begin by reiterating Algeria's commitment to the principles of the Chemical Weapons Convention ("the Convention") and to its noble objectives to achieve a world free of weapons of mass destruction. My country reaffirms its condemnation of any use of chemical weapons, by anyone, for whatever reason, and under any circumstances.

Today, the Organisation constitutes one of the multilateral disarmament mechanisms that has made enormous progress in eliminating chemical weapons from the world. At the same time, and in an ever-changing world, our Organisation has faced challenges which continue to multiply with the emergence of new threats, be they at the global, regional, or national level.

Terrorism, transnational crime, the illicit transfer and trade in weapons, and everything that comes with the fears of the re-emergence of chemical weapons constitute new challenges that go beyond the capabilities and measures of States to respond, and require common and concerted action on a global scale.

Algeria reiterates its commitment and dedication to contributing actively to the global effort to strengthen the United Nations' disarmament system aimed at consolidating peace and security in our region and throughout the world.

My country's contribution to the funding for the future Centre for Chemistry and Technology (ChemTech Centre) is part of this commitment. It demonstrates our support of the mechanisms under the Convention that are aimed at increasing efficiency and reliability, and are a testament to my country's desire to have this project serve the objectives of the Organisation, in particular in terms of capacity building. My delegation welcomes the progress made in the project. The building's first pillar ceremony on 23 November 2021 marks an important step towards its completion.

My country's commitment can also be seen in the efforts made by the relevant Algerian authorities responsible for implementing the Convention at the national level. These institutions have capitalised on their proven track record in their field. Algeria, which has always encouraged cooperation, has always voiced its willingness to share its experience with other countries in our region and subregion.

In this connection, Algeria has organised, in cooperation with the OPCW, events and seminars for African experts under the OPCW Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa ("the Africa Programme"), the last such event being held in July 2021. My delegation regrets that certain events could not be held in person owing to the restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, but hopes there will be a return to the normal format for holding these events.

In this regard, my country is also working to ensure that its activities are conducted within the framework of the efforts to establish centres or clusters of excellence in Africa, with a regional scope, and reiterates its full willingness to host the centre for the North Africa and Sahel region. Such an initiative will help to strengthen cooperation between the countries in the region and will improve the performance of national entities in carrying out their duties.

We welcome the major accomplishments in Convention implementation, in particular with respect to the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles. This sends a strong signal about the trust that Member States have in the Convention.

Algeria considers that this significant and remarkable progress in the area of chemical disarmament is the result of the spirit of consensus and cooperation that has characterised the work of this Organisation.

It is crucial that the gains of the Organisation be preserved and that the efforts that we have all made be continued, so that the objectives of the Convention can be achieved in the same spirit of responsible and consensus-based cooperation.

Nevertheless, the emergence of diverging points of view during the meetings of the Organisation over the past few years, as well as the recurrent use of the voting procedure to adopt its decisions, is a source of concern.

With the lack of consensus there is a risk of moving the Organisation away from its technical nature and of exposing it to political pressure and to the contingencies of short-term realities.

My delegation regrets the excessive use of the vote to adopt important decisions related to the functioning of the Organisation, such as the decision on the Programme and Budget of the OPCW. We would like to go back to the old practice in order to achieve the desired consensus around this and all other issues.

Regarding the Syrian chemical dossier, we should encourage cooperation and the search for constructive and productive contact between the authorities of that country and the Secretariat, with a view to finding the appropriate solutions to ease the tensions and settle the outstanding issues once and for all.

My delegation also considers that our collective action should go hand in hand with a joint international effort aimed at promoting technological cooperation and scientific exchange in order to guarantee, for all States Parties, the expression, in concrete terms, of their enshrined right to use chemistry for peaceful purposes.

The guiding principle behind our activities should be the implementation of the Convention and its objectives, in order that the various regions benefit from its advantages, and that we focus our efforts on the use of chemistry to pursue the development goals of our countries.

Strengthening cooperation and exchanging experiences among the States Parties are the cornerstone of this endeavour. In this connection, we welcome the inclusion, in the decision on the OPCW biennial Programme and Budget for 2022 and 2023, of the African Group's initiative inviting the States Parties and the Secretariat to work together to ensure complete and effective implementation of cooperation programmes by considering appropriate measures, including the retention of unspent funds for cooperation programmes in a special fund.

We believe that particular attention should be paid to the African continent and to capacity building of national entities in the countries of this region, in order to help them tackle the difficulties facing the continent and to carry out their duties and responsibilities fully.

I should like to underscore the importance of continuing and consolidating the Africa Programme, currently in its fifth phase, and whose next phase will begin in 2023.

We consider that this cooperation programme should be given appropriate funding consideration through the allocation of sufficient resources at regular and predictable levels in the Organisation's regular budget.

Sustained institutional cooperation between the African Union and the OPCW should also be established and consolidated so that this partnership can reach its full potential, the first priority being to ensure that our continent reaps the benefits of the Convention and that its objectives are implemented as best as possible.

We also consider it necessary to promote better representation of African candidates throughout the Organisation, especially in the Secretariat, as at present such representation still falls short of desired levels. This will help to strengthen the capacity of the Organisation's staff, to include the countries of our region in the various processes of Convention implementation, and to ensure a significant presence and better representation within the Organisation.

To conclude, we are convinced that the Director-General, Mr Fernando Arias, will be able to maintain the positive results and the various gains made by this Organisation. He knows that in order to achieve this he can count on the unfailing support of Algeria.

Finally, I would ask that this statement be circulated as an official document of this session and that it be published on the OPCW's external server and public website.

Thank you.

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