



**OPCW**

**Executive Council**

Ninety-Ninth Session

8 – 10 March 2022

EC-99/NAT.48

8 March 2022

ENGLISH and FRENCH only

**KINGDOM OF MOROCCO**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR MOHAMED BASRI  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO TO THE  
OPCW AT THE NINETY-NINTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Madam Chairperson,  
Mr Director-General,  
Excellencies, dear colleagues,

First off, the delegation of the Kingdom of Morocco should like to congratulate H.E. Ambassador Eniola Olaitan Ajayi, the Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to the OPCW, on her appointment as Chairperson of the Executive Council (“the Council”), succeeding H.E. Ambassador Abdelouahab Bellouki, the former Permanent Representative of Morocco. I am convinced that her personal and professional qualities will allow her to lead this session to a successful conclusion.

I should also like to thank H.E. Ambassador Gudrun Lingner, the Permanent Representative of Germany, for her work and commitment in preparing the work of this session.

My delegation was honoured to have Morocco, represented by H.E. Ambassador Abdelouahab Bellouki, chair this Council, thanks to the heartfelt support of the Group of African States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”) and to the unanimous support of all members of the Council. My delegation would like to express its determination to continue working in concert with all members of this Council.

I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Director-General of the OPCW, Mr Fernando Arias, on his reappointment as Head of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) by the Conference of the States Parties (“the Conference”) at its Twenty-Sixth Session, and to underscore the dedication and professionalism of the Technical Secretariat (“the Secretariat”). Furthermore, the Moroccan delegation extends its thanks to the Director-General for his comprehensive and informative report to this session, and to the Vice-Chairpersons of the Council for their respective reports.

In addition, I wish to commend the Secretariat for its work to ensure health and safety and to minimise the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, thereby allowing the work of the OPCW to take place under the best possible conditions.

My delegation fully aligns itself with the statement of the African Group, delivered by the Chairperson of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism, H.E. Ambassador Vusimuzi Madonsela, the Permanent Representative of South Africa, and with that of the States Parties



of the Non-Aligned Movement and China, delivered by H.E. Ambassador Fikrat Akhundov, the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan.

Morocco underscores the need for a balanced and optimal implementation of the Convention and reiterates its call for capacity building in the States Parties, particularly developing ones. Such an approach will help to effectively step up the fight against the proliferation of the chemical threat worldwide and help States Parties to comply fully with their obligations under the Convention.

In this regard, my delegation continues to support the Director-General's initiative regarding the establishment of the OPCW Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa ("the Africa Programme"), whose primary objective is to promote Convention implementation in Africa.

Further, my delegation welcomes the convening of the fourth meeting of the Africa Programme Steering Committee. We express our gratitude to those countries that have made financial contributions to the Programme, and consider that its sustainability mainly depends on a more stable method of financing in the regular budget.

Morocco welcomes the implementation of the fifth phase of the Africa Programme, despite the challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and expresses its strong commitment towards active South-South cooperation among all stakeholders in order to promote the exchange of best practices and mutual capacity building, taking into account the specificities of each State Party and each subregion.

In this context, my country continues its work to promote cooperation among African States Parties. Following the example of the cooperation between the National Authorities of Morocco and Togo in 2018–2019 within the framework of the Mentorship/Partnership Programme, Morocco welcomes the launch of the same project with Mauritania this year. Against this background, the Moroccan and Mauritanian representatives had the chance to meet last week during an initial field visit to Morocco, which was an opportunity for the respective experts to share their experience and expertise on the practical aspects of Convention implementation.

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 Director-General and 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.

The use of chemical agents as weapons by non-State actors is now a genuine risk, as highlighted by the relevant reports of the OPCW. These serious concerns demonstrate the meaningfulness and relevance 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.

With a view to contributing to the efforts to fight chemical threats in Africa, the Moroccan Regional Training Centre for North Africa and the Sahel organised, jointly with the OPCW, a basic online course from 7 to 10 December 2020 within the framework of Article X of the Convention, in order to help States Parties in the region strengthen their capacities to deal with chemical incidents. The course was an opportunity for African experts to improve their skills in regard to the management of emergencies involving chemical weapons or toxic industrial chemicals.

Additionally, following the online training, a basic, in-person course is planned to be held soon for African experts from North Africa and the Sahel. In this regard my delegation welcomes the Secretariat's willingness to cooperate with all of the centres of excellence established by the States Parties in the North Africa and Sahel region.

Concerning the issues related to organisational governance, my delegation supports the consultations led by the co-facilitators, H.E. Ambassador Elizabeth Ward Neiman, the Permanent Representative of Panama, and by H.E. Ambassador Matthew Neuhaus, the Permanent Representative of Australia, with a view to reconciling the different points of view. In this context, my delegation would underscore that constructive and inclusive dialogue between the States Parties will support Convention implementation and streamline our Organisation's operations. In this regard, special attention must be paid to equitable geographical distribution and gender balance among the overall staff of the Organisation.

Morocco expresses its full support for the OPCW project to establish a Centre for Chemistry and Technology (ChemTech Centre), and is delighted with its progress, as outlined by the latest report of the Secretariat. One should underscore the need to adapt to the ever-growing training needs of experts and the strengthening of the various institutions in the States Parties involved in Convention implementation. This future Centre will provide the Organisation with an infrastructure that is capable of meeting the current challenges related to Convention implementation. The stable funding of the ChemTech Centre through the regular budget will demonstrate the joint commitment of the States Parties to effectively achieve the objectives of the Organisation.

In this regard, the Moroccan delegation notes with satisfaction the efforts undertaken to establish designated laboratories in Africa and Latin America, which in particular improve the response capabilities of the States Parties in cases of chemical incidents or terrorist attacks. In this connection, my delegation welcomes the twinning programme, agreed in cooperation with the OPCW, between the Moroccan national forensic laboratory and the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory of the United States.

In conclusion, my delegation notes with satisfaction that the total and complete destruction of worldwide declared stockpiles of chemical weapons is drawing to a close. The destruction of this category of chemical weapons will mark an historic milestone in the process of elimination of weapons of mass destruction.

The States Parties are called upon to prioritise inclusivity and dialogue and to promote compromise and dialogue in order to consolidate this progress and to maintain the unity and effectiveness of the OPCW.

I thank you for your kind attention.

I would ask that this statement be considered as an official document of the Ninety-Ninth Session of the Council.