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**KINGDOM OF MOROCCO**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR ABDELOUAHAB BELLOUKI  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO TO THE  
OPCW AT THE TWENTY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE  
STATES PARTIES**

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

To begin I should like to warmly congratulate H.E. Ambassador Bård Ivar Svendsen, the Permanent Representative of Norway, for his well-deserved election as Chairperson of the Twenty-Sixth Session of the Conference of the States Parties (“the Conference”) and express to him the full support of the Moroccan delegation. I am convinced that your proven abilities and professional skills will guide the deliberations of this session towards a successful outcome. I should also like to extend my sincere congratulations to your distinguished predecessor, H.E. Ambassador José Antonio Zabalgoitia Trejo, the Permanent Representative of Mexico, for his remarkable efforts and outstanding leadership as Chairperson of this August Conference.

I also wish to express my appreciation to the Director-General of the Organisation, Ambassador Fernando Arias, for his useful and insightful statement. I would also take this opportunity to praise the professionalism and dedication of all of the members of the of the Technical Secretariat (“the Secretariat”).

On behalf of the Moroccan delegation, I would like to express full support for the appointment of Director-General Fernando Arias for a second term, and to congratulate him for his unwavering commitment to implementing the noble objectives of the Organisation, all in spite of the worldwide impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Furthermore, my delegation fully aligns itself with the statement of the Africa Group, delivered by H.E. Ambassador Vusimuzi Philemon 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.

Consistent with its principled position of a strong and complete commitment to the objectives of disarmament, non-proliferation, and the fight against weapons of mass destruction, the Kingdom of Morocco reaffirms its unwavering support of the noble objectives of the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”).



The Kingdom of Morocco reiterates once again, in the strongest possible terms, its categorical condemnation of the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, under any circumstances, and for whatever reason. The use of chemical weapons is a flagrant violation of Convention. The States Parties must work together to strengthen this vital legal instrument, which has allowed for the elimination of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. Likewise, all stakeholders are called upon to work steadfastly to strengthen the Convention and to further consolidate our Organisation's role in achieving a world free from chemical weapons.

My delegation, in reference to the latest reports communicated by the Director-General and by the Declaration Assessment Team, notes with satisfaction the verified and complete destruction of chemical weapons production facilities declared by the Syrian Arab Republic. My country encourages the continuation of a constructive dialogue between that State Party and the Secretariat, to ensure the optimal implementation of the provisions of the Convention and the relevant decisions on this subject, as well as to resolve all of the outstanding questions that still remain unanswered.

Morocco is committed to a balanced and optimal implementation of the Convention, and reiterates its call for capacity building in the States Parties, particularly developing ones, to make an effective contribution to the fight against the proliferation of the chemical threat worldwide and to help States Parties to comply fully with their obligations under the Convention.

In this connection, my delegation warmly welcomes the Director-General's commitment to the African continent. The relevance of the activities implemented within the framework of the OPCW Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa ("the Africa Programme") has been the basis for its success. I applaud the way in which the Secretariat adapted to the pandemic by offering alternative remote trainings in order to maintain the objectives set for the fifth phase of the Programme.

In this regard, Morocco is pleased that the fourth coordination meeting of the Africa Programme Steering Committee was held online with the participation of the Director-General and countries that have guided and supported the Programme. While expressing gratitude to those countries that have made financial contributions to this Programme, my delegation considers that its sustainability depends on a more stable method of financing in the regular budget.

In this context, and in order to promote and streamline the implementation of training activities, my delegation would underscore the need for full implementation of capacity-building programmes in line with the budget headings specifically devoted to these programmes each year.

Moreover, my country reiterates its commitment and determination to continue coordinating and cooperating with the Secretariat to improve implementation of the provisions of the Convention on our continent. It should be pointed out that strengthening coordination and consultation among all stakeholders is a way to optimise Convention implementation in Africa.

Here, Morocco wishes to emphasise that national capacity building in Africa will be achieved mainly through the promotion of active and effective South-South cooperation which takes into account the specificities of each State Party and subregion. The launch of projects for training and the exchange of technical expertise in this framework, in particular in the areas of prevention and protection against chemical weapons, has proven relevant for our continent.

In this regard, the Moroccan delegation notes with satisfaction the projects to strengthen analytical capabilities of laboratories in Africa and Latin America, improving the response capabilities of the States Parties in cases of chemical incidents or terrorist attacks.

In this context, my country continues its work to promote cooperation among African States Parties. Following 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 will have an opportunity to make reciprocal field visits, during which the respective experts will share their experiences and expertise on the practical aspects of Convention implementation.

With a view to contributing to the efforts to counter chemical threats in Africa, the Moroccan Regional Training Centre for North Africa and the Sahel, jointly with the OPCW, held from 7 to 10 December 2021 a basic online course within the framework of Article X of the Convention, aimed at helping States Parties in the region strengthen their capabilities 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 training, a basic, in-person course is planned to be held soon for African experts from the subregion.

Morocco is aware of the threat that chemical warfare poses to international peace and security, and accordingly supports activities aimed at strengthening the capacities of the States Parties to combat the re-emergence of chemical weapons. In this framework, my country, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Convention and United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), adopted in December 2020 a legal framework (Law 42-05) establishing a national mechanism for the import and export control of dual-use goods, in order to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons and their delivery systems.

Furthermore, in the exercise of its obligations under the Convention, my country's Council of Ministers approved on 28 June 2021 the law amending and supplementing national legislation regarding the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and on their destruction (Law 36-09). In accordance with decisions C-24/DEC.4 and C-24/DEC.5 (both dated 27 November 2019) taken by the Conference at its Twenty-Fourth Session, the new adopted law covers the update to Schedule 1, annexed to the law through the addition of a series of chemicals, and also provides for a flexible mechanism for updating the schedules annexed to the Convention.

In this framework, Morocco expresses its full support for the establishment of the OPCW Centre for Chemistry and Technology (ChemTech Centre) and is pleased with the progress being made. The first pillar ceremony held in September 2021 was indeed an important milestone towards completion of this innovative project. 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 a modern infrastructure adapted to the specific needs to meet 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.

Further, my delegation underscores the importance of the work carried out by the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach. The various methodologies recommended by the Board, such as the “active learning” approach, are promising and will ensure better understanding of the Convention by all stakeholders. My country is aware of the importance of education and outreach activities, and has organised several workshops, colloquiums, and trainings aimed at strengthening chemical and biological safety and security. These are intended for academics, researchers in different disciplines, university students, and civil society representatives.

The threat of chemical terrorism remains a serious cause for concern and a challenge for the States Parties. The use of chemicals as weapons by non-State actors is now a genuine risk, as highlighted by the relevant reports of the OPCW. With the Secretariat’s support, the States Parties, particularly in Africa, must acquire the capabilities needed to counter this alarming threat. These terrorist risks pose a genuine threat not just to conflict zones but also to international peace and security.

Against a backdrop in which the extremist threat exists on various levels, my country welcomes the relevant activities that have been carried out within the framework of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism, chaired by H.E. Ambassador Vusimuzi Madonsela, the Permanent Representative of South Africa, as well as the previous contributions by the Sub-Working Group on Non-State Actors.

In this regard, my delegation welcomes, within the framework of the Africa Programme, the establishment of a Steering Committee and activities aimed at improving coordination among stakeholders and at consolidating chemical detection capabilities, especially to counter the risks of chemical terrorism and to neutralise the *modi operandi* of non-State actors. Likewise, tailored training in decontamination, mobile reconnaissance, sampling, and chemical analysis remains necessary and deserves special attention.

With regard to issues of organisational governance within the OPCW, my delegation commends the work carried out 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, and moreover supports any proposal aimed at strengthening Convention implementation and at preserving the technical nature of the Organisation.

To conclude, I am pleased to note that, under the Director-General’s leadership, the full and complete destruction of worldwide chemical weapons stockpiles is drawing to a close. The forthcoming destruction of this category of chemical weapon will be an important milestone in the process to eliminate weapons of mass destruction. In order to consolidate these achievements, States Parties are called upon to emphasise inclusiveness and to promote dialogue and compromise, in order to uphold the unity and effectiveness of the Organisation to achieve the objectives of the Convention, the universality of which must remain an absolute priority.

I thank you for your kind attention and would ask that this statement be considered as an official document of this session of the Conference.

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