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MOROCCO

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR MOHAMED BASRI
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO TO
THE OPCW AT THE 100TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

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

On behalf of the delegation of the Kingdom of Morocco, I present to you, Ambassador Ziad Bin Maashi Al Atiyah, Permanent Representative of the fraternal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, my brotherly congratulations on your appointment as Chairperson of the Executive Council (“the Council”), succeeding the distinguished Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Her Excellency Eniola Olaitan Ajayi.

My delegation fully supports your chairpersonship of this august Council. I am convinced that your personal and professional qualities will allow you to lead the work of this session to a successful conclusion.

I should like to pay a warm tribute to the dedication and professionalism of the Director-General of the OPCW, H.E. Fernando Arias, and to the staff of the Technical Secretariat (“the Secretariat”). The Moroccan delegation thanks the Director-General for his comprehensive and informative report to this session, and the Vice-Chairpersons of the Council for their respective reports.

Additionally, I wish to commend the work of the Director-General, Mr Fernando Arias, and of the Secretariat staff in addressing health concerns and minimising 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 Coordinator 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 Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”), and reiterates its call for the continuation of capacity-building efforts in the States Parties, particularly developing ones. Such an approach will give States Parties greater capacity to comply fully with their obligations under the Convention and thereby effectively step up the fight against the proliferation of the chemical threat worldwide.



It is in this context that Morocco 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 holding, on 24 June 2022, of the fifth meeting of the Africa Programme Steering Committee, and expresses its gratitude to those countries that financially support the Programme. In this connection, it is appropriate to point out that the sustainability of the Africa Programme depends mainly on a more stable and predictable method of financing through the regular budget.

Morocco welcomes the steadfast continuation of activities planned within the framework of the fifth phase of the Africa Programme, despite the challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. In this respect, my country expresses its strong commitment towards active and dynamic South-South cooperation to optimally leverage Convention implementation in Africa. In this connection, the Moroccan delegation calls for more coordination among all stakeholders in order to promote the exchange of good practices and mutual capacity building, taking into account the specificities of each State Party and each subregion.

Indeed, the Twentieth Regional Meeting of National Authorities States Parties in Africa, held online from 31 May to 2 June 2022, was a chance to evaluate the Africa Programme during its fifth phase. Moreover, that meeting was an opportunity for African States Parties to review the priorities of the sixth phase of the Programme.

Morocco remains confident about the possibility of the establishment of a sixth phase for the Africa Programme that will capitalise on the current achievements and adopt an achievable action plan that covers the needs and priorities of the African continent. In this regard, my country would underscore the importance of the following:

- the need for a tailor-made approach to identify the needs of the States Parties in the area of chemical safety and security and to provide the most relevant response, mainly through capacity-building initiatives;
- the promotion of South-South cooperation and knowledge transfer among African States Parties in the area of chemical emergency response;
- capacity building in States Parties to deal with the serious threat of acquisition of chemical weapons by non-State actors and terrorist groups; and
- continuation of capacity building in African laboratories.

In an effort to establish active, sustainable, and effective subregional coordination, the National Authorities of Morocco and Mauritania launched, with the Secretariat's support, a partnership throughout 2022 to strengthen Convention implementation. My country is pleased that the first field visit to Morocco by the Mauritanian National Authority took place in February 2022. A second field visit to Mauritania will be planned soon. Ultimately, this partnership will lead to the establishment of a subregional mechanism based on the exchange of expertise and the sharing of best practices with a view to strengthening, among others, national implementation measures as well as chemical safety and security.

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 call for 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 Syria 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 unanswered questions that remain.

The use of chemical agents as weapons by non-State actors constitutes a serious threat to the security of the States Parties. The Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism, chaired by H.E. Ambassador Vusimuzi Madonsela, the Permanent Representative of South Africa, and the Sub-Working Group on Non-State Actors, have now become the ideal forum for the exchange of expertise and best practices in the fight against the threats related to chemical terrorism. In this connection, my country underscores the need to implement capacity-building activities aimed at addressing this threat.

Convinced of the importance of improving the capacities of African experts in managing emergencies involving chemical weapons and toxic industrial chemicals, the Moroccan Regional Training Centre for North Africa and the Sahel held, jointly with the OPCW, a basic online course 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.

As a follow-up to this 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 wishes to acknowledge the considerable efforts made 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 the continuation of constructive and inclusive dialogue between the States Parties will support Convention implementation and streamline our Organisation's operations. My delegation would underscore that special attention must be paid to equitable geographical distribution and to gender balance among the 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. This future Centre will provide the Organisation with the capacities needed to meet the current challenges related to Convention implementation. In this regard, we would emphasise the need to address the growing training needs of the various stakeholders in 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 commends the Secretariat's efforts aimed at establishing designated laboratories in Africa and Latin America, which in particular will improve the response capabilities of the States Parties in cases of chemical incidents and offer better capacity-building potential.

In conclusion, my delegation is pleased to note 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 a historic milestone in the process to eliminate weapons of mass destruction. The Fifth Review Conference is an opportunity for all of the States Parties to adopt consensus-based recommendations to consolidate these achievements and to preserve the unity and effectiveness of our Organisation. In this regard, the States Parties are called upon to prioritise inclusivity and to promote dialogue and a sense of compromise.

Thank you.

I would ask that this statement be considered as an official document of the 100th Session of the Council.

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