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Ambassade d'Algérie à La Haye

سفارة الجزائر بلاهاي

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Salima Abdelhak
Permanent Representative of
the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
to the OPCW**

**28th session of Conference of the States Parties to the Convention
on the Chemical Weapons**

CSP- 28

November 27th – December 1st, 2023

Mr Chairperson,

Mr Director-General,

Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like, to welcome H.E. Ambassador Suljuk Mustansar Tarar, the Permanent Representative of The Republic of Pakistan, as Chair of the 28th session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Chemical Weapons. We are confident with his diplomatic skills he will steer the deliberations of our session to a successful conclusion. He can rely on the support of my delegation to that end.

I also commend the work done by H.E. Ambassador Vusi Musi Madonsella of South Africa as outgoing Chairperson.

I wish also to express our gratitude to the Director-General, Ambassador Fernando Arias, for his comprehensive report and the numerous activities the staff of the Technical Secretariat organized worldwide to ensure the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

The Algerian delegation aligns itself with the statements of H.E. Mr Calixto Ortega Rios, Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the OPCW, on behalf of the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Convention and China, and with the statement of H.E. Ambassador Francis Danti Kotia, the Permanent Representative of Ghana to the OCPW, on behalf of the Africa Group.

Mr. Chairperson,

This session provides us with the opportunity to take stock of our achievements this year as it intervenes after intensive work conducted within the three EC sessions and the comprehensive 5TH review conference and I must say that the assessment is truly positive.

- We have strengthened our organisation through the Chem-tech Center, which has been consistently providing a wide range of training since its inauguration and continues to do so.
- The RevConf provided us with a fresh perspective on our organization and with a set of strategic guidelines, some of which ultimately achieved the required consensus for adoption to mention the decisions on geographic representation and tenure policy.
- The main significant achievement of the organization during this year is undoubtedly the complete destruction of the remaining declared chemical weapons stockpiles in July by the USA enabling OPCW to achieve its primary objective.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Africa program has proven to be a crucial instrument for the International Cooperation and Assistance (ICA) in facilitating South-South cooperation, thanks to the dedicated Technical Secretariat and the involvement of our partners with both funding and expertise. I cannot help but mention its latest activity, a successful big scale project, "Chemex Africa 2023" held in Algiers in the fall with the objective to strengthen capacities of African first responders in case of chemical incident.

Lessons, experiences and appreciations have been shared within a crowded side event organized yesterday jointly by Algeria, Canada and the TS. Considering its success, Chemex Africa is worth replicating in other regions.

Mr. Chairperson,

We are encouraged by these achievements and motivated to step up to ongoing challenges, including promoting Universality, ensuring the peaceful use of chemistry for development, preventing the reemergence of chemical weapons, and addressing the potential use of these weapons by terrorist groups or non-state actors. Only through commitment and positive dialogue within the Organization can we effectively address these challenges.

Most importantly, it is crucial to safeguard these achievements and prevent their compromise, especially considering the heightened polarization observed today. therefore, it is imperative to uphold the technical character of the OPCW and refrain from compromising the integrity of the CWC through interpretations that diverge from its spirit, objectives, and purpose. Let's promote a cooperative approach rather than relying on numerical strength as a force-driven strategy to bring back the OPCW consensual decision making process .

Mr. Chairperson,

Algeria strongly opposes the use of chemical weapons by any party, anywhere, at any time, and under any circumstances.

We welcome the progress, Highlighted by DG's Report, on the discussions between the Republic of Syria and the OPCW Technical Secretariat and the convening of the 25th round of consultation between the Declaration Assessment Team and the Syrian National Authority. We look forward to the positive outcomes of these consultations on the outstanding issues in the Syrian chemical file.

Mr. Chairperson,

The issue of universality remains a top priority more than ever. It has been brought to the forefront by the war on the Palestinians. We therefore urge the Director General and the Secretariat to continue engaging with States not yet party to the Convention, urging their involvement in the collective efforts towards international peace and security.

In this regard, while we are encouraged by the meeting between the Director General and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of South Sudan held in Algiers, Algeria in the margins of "Chemex Africa" last October. We would like to express our great concern about the ongoing aggression of the Israeli occupying forces against the Palestinians and the risk of use of Chemical weapons or chemical toxic products against them by Israel, being out of the Convention.

The threats being real, we welcome and support the request submitted by the Palestinian MFA for OPCW assistance and investigation on the matter. We are confident that the Technical Secretariat will provide all the required assistance as stated in the DG answer; for the protection of the people of Palestine as a committed party to the Convention. We are also assured the TS will keep monitoring the situation as highlighted the DG in his report yesterday.

Finally, while wishing our session successful outcomes, I would like to request the complete version of our statement be circulated as an official document of this session and be published on the OPCW's external and public website.

Thank you.