

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF AFRICAN STATES PARTIES TO THE
CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION DELIVERED BY THE COORDINATOR OF THE
GROUP, H.E. FRANCIS D. KOTIA, AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA TO THE ORGANISATION FOR THE
PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS (OPCW)
HUNDRED AND FIFTH SESSION, THE HAGUE, 5 – 8 MARCH 2024
THE OPCW PROGRAMME FOR AFRICA**

Chairperson,

The Africa Group welcomes back H.E. Ambassador Lucian Fătu, Ambassador and the Permanent Representative of Romania to the OPCW, as Chair of the One Hundred and Fifth Session of the Executive Council. The Group assures you of its continuous support.

2. The Group commends the Director-General of the OPCW, H.E. Mr. Fernando Arias and the Technical Secretariat for their dedication and commitment to the implementation of the OPCW Programme for Africa.

3. Over the past seventeen (17) years since the inception of the Africa Programme in 2007, we have witnessed incremental progress from one phase to the next. The Technical Secretariat has continued to define special projects for the Africa Programme. The tangible progress in the Programme's implementation can be attributed to the Technical Secretariat's commitment as well as to the wide and inclusive consultations with a variety of stakeholders on the effective implementation of the programme, the sixth phase of which was launched in January, 2023.

4. Continually reviewing, adapting and developing tailor-made programmes that focus on regional and sub-regional priorities will help to sharpen the outcomes of the Africa Programme. In this regard, the Group encourages the Technical Secretariat to regularly obtain feedback from National Authorities and participants of the capacity-building programmes.

5. The Group further commends the OPCW for jointly organising with the Government of the Republic of South Africa an *Incidents Commanders Course for Africa States Parties* held from 21 August to 1 September 2023, in South Africa to equip participants from African States with the leadership capacities required to handle chemical emergency and to increase the number of experts able to operate in a command role. This is in line with the Africa programme's aim to provide capacity building for the implementation of Article X of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

6. The Group is convinced that implementing targeted Programme impact assessment, results-based approach and embedding the Africa Programme targets in the annual workplan of the International Cooperation and Assistance Division (ICA), will contribute to further accomplishments under the Sixth Phase of this Programme.

7. The Group reiterates its appreciation for the organisation of the Pan-African multi-component chemical emergency response capacity-building exercise for the Africa region "Chemex Africa 2023", by the Technical Secretariat in collaboration with the Government of Algeria, in Algiers from 23rd September to 4th October 2023, and

looks forward to more of such events aimed at building national capacities and encouraging regional and South-South cooperation. The Group also commends the Government of Canada for funding the programme.

8. In addition, the Africa Group reiterates its appreciation to the Technical Secretariat and the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco for the organisation of the Five (5)- day basic course on Chemical emergency preparedness for North Africa and the Sahel Region, in Rabat from 27 February to 3 March 2023.

9. We encourage the Technical Secretariat to continue developing tailor-made programmes focusing on regional and sub-regional priorities, including the development of laboratory capacities and centres of excellence in Africa, as well as strengthening cooperation with the African Union Commission.

10. At present, the Africa Programme is partially funded under the regular budget and partially through voluntary contributions. The Group reiterates its appreciation to the States Parties that have made voluntary contributions and for the role that these contributions have played in the continuation and success of the Africa Programme. While voluntary funding has had positive impacts on the Programme, it also has inherent challenges such as unpredictability, which would impact the sustainability of the Programme. The Group therefore underscores the importance of fully funding the Africa Programme under the regular budget of the OPCW in order to guarantee its sustainability and predictability. Until this strategic objective is realised, in the meantime we call upon potential donors, including States Parties as well as International Organisations, to continue to support the Africa programme as well as all International Cooperation and Assistance projects and activities being carried out by the Organisation. The Group looks forward to engaging with the Technical Secretariat and other regional groups on this matter.

11. In conclusion, Chairperson, we reiterate the Africa Group's commitment to continue working with the Technical Secretariat and States Parties for the successful implementation of the African Programme.

12. The African Group would like to request that this statement be published as an official document of this session.

13. I thank you for your kind attention.