

**NATIONAL STATEMENT OF THE**

**FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA**

**DELIVERED**

**AT THE**

**109<sup>TH</sup> EXECUTIVE COUNCIL SESSION**

**OF THE**

**ORGANIZATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL**  
**WEAPONS**

**HOLDING FROM 8<sup>TH</sup> – 11<sup>TH</sup> JULY, 2025**

**AT THE HAGUE,**

**THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS**

## **Mr. Chairperson**

### **Excellencies**

### **Distinguished Delegates**

It gives me great pleasure to be at the 109<sup>th</sup> Session of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). At the outset, permit me to use this opportunity to welcome and congratulate H. E. Mr. Thomas Schied, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Germany as he assumes duty as Chairperson of the One Hundred and Ninth Session of the Executive Council. I also extend profound gratitude to H. E. Andres Horacio Teran Parral for his sterling leadership of the just concluded Session. Mr. Chairperson, please be rest assured of Nigeria's unwavering support during your Chairmanship.

2. Similarly, my delegation extends gratitude to the Director General of the OPCW, H.E. Ambassador Fernando Arias and his entire Staff for the continued stewardship of the Technical Secretariat despite challenging times. The progress realized thus far, is a testament to our commitment and collective resolve to implement the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

3. The Nigerian delegation aligns itself with the statement of the African Group delivered by Ambassador Vusimuzi Philemon Madonsela, Permanent Representative of the Republic of South Africa, and the statement of the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the CWC and China, delivered by H.E. Ambassador Mirjam Blaak Sow, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Uganda.

## **Mr. Chairperson,**

4. Following our last meeting, our delegation has been monitoring global developments, particularly as they concern the Syrian chemical weapons dossier. We commend the efforts made by the Director General on this endeavour, including the recent missions to Syria by the Technical Secretariat (TS) as well as the convening of the briefing Session for States Parties on the Syria Arab Republic held on 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 2025. While we applaud the progress made so far, the situation surrounding the undeclared chemical weapons sites remains a cause for concern as this raises the possibility of chemical weapons falling into the hands of non-State Actors.

5. Our delegation, therefore, calls on the TS to ensure that necessary steps are taken to ensure the complete closure of the Syria chemical weapons file. To this

end, we welcome the creation of the Office of Special Mission, which collapses the Investigation and Identification Teams (IIT), Declaration and Assessment Team (DAT) and the Fact-Finding Mission in Syria (FFM) into one omnibus operation better suited for efficiency and coordination as well as serving as a future mechanism for the execution of OPCW mandate. My delegation, therefore, encourages all States Parties to provide all necessary budgetary and extra-budgetary financial and in-kind support towards this goal, as failure to do so might culminate in drastic rollback of years of positive momentum.

**Mr. Chairperson,**

6. We are only as strong as our weakest link, current global developments further necessitate the need for all State Parties to be better equipped in the areas of strengthening legislative frameworks, capacity building and training, knowledge and experience exchange and monitoring and evaluation. To this end, we welcome the progress made under the Africa Programme since its inception in 2007 as well as the milestones achieved in the Phases leading up to the Sixth Phase of the Programmes. In this regard, Nigeria extends its appreciation to the States Parties and other partners who have over the years, provided voluntary contributions to the Africa Programme. Indeed, the programme is a veritable tool that continues to assist African States in the implementation of the CWC. To this end, there is the need for the programme to be sustained and funded under the regular budget of the OPCW.

**Mr. Chairperson,**

7. The emergence of technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), has the propensity to significantly impact the implementation of the CWC by enhancing monitoring, detection and response capabilities related to chemical weapons and toxic substances. AI-driven analytics can improve the accuracy and efficiency of data collection and analysis, which enable governments and organizations to better track the production and transfer of scheduled chemicals and identify potential non-compliance or illicit activity.

8. Furthermore, AI, no doubt, has the bent to enhance training programs for first responders and law enforcement agencies by providing simulations and predictive modeling for chemical incidents, thereby improving preparedness and response measures. However, the integration of AI also raises new challenges, such as the need for updated regulatory frameworks to address the risks associated with its misuse in developing chemical agents or enabling non-State Actors to bypass existing controls.

**Mr. Chairperson,  
Distinguished Delegates,**

9. The 109<sup>th</sup> Session provides another opportunity to remind ourselves why this noble Institution was created on 29<sup>th</sup> April 1997, following the entry into force of the CWC. Since its inception, various Director Generals have incrementally pushed the bar forward leading to the destruction of 100% of the chemical weapons stockpiles declared by possessor States. While we salute the legacies of previous DGs, we especially want to extend our commendation to H.E. Ambassador Fernando Arias who has steered the affairs of the organization so meritoriously.

10. However, despite the progress made, several current global events have sparked growing sentiments on the need to remain vigilant if we are to continue to uphold our solemn responsibility as guardians of the Convention. Nigeria is of the firm believe that to consolidate on the gains made thus far and take the organization to the next level, we need strong, knowledgeable, audacious replacement who will be friendly, fair but firm. That's why the Federal Republic of Nigeria has fielded the Candidature of Ambassador (Dr.) Eniola AJAYI. Voting for Nigeria's candidate will not only be giving Africa a chance to steer the affairs of this great institution but also, provide the opportunity for the first black woman to lead the Organization. Ambassador Ajayi is a seasoned Diplomat, Scientist and an astute Administrator who has the qualities to take forward the OPCW.

### **Excellencies**

11. In conclusion, the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria counts on your invaluable support when it matters the most.

I Thank You.

**My delegation requests that the full version of the Statement be circulated and posted on the External Server as an official document of this Session.**