

STATEMENT ON THE OPCW AFRICA PROGRAMME DELIVERED BY DEPUTY COORDINATOR OF THE AFRICAN GROUP, H.E. MRS. MADELEINE LIGUEMOH ONDOUA, AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON TO THIRTIETH (30TH) SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES TO THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION, HELD ON 24 – 28 NOVEMBER 2025, THE HAGUE, THE NETHERLANDS

Chairperson,

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

2. The Group welcomes H.E. Mr Agustín Vásquez Gómez, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of El Salvador to the OPCW. The Group assures him of our support in steering the deliberations of this session to a successful conclusion. The Group also wishes to thank H.E. Mr. Almir Šahović Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the OPCW for his successful steering of CSP 29.

The Group wishes to express its satisfaction with the work of the Steering Committee, which benefited from the expertise of the staff of the International Cooperation and Assistance Service. The Group also commends the professionalism and dynamism of the program coordinator, Mr. Dawsar Drissi. His dedication and commitment are invaluable assets that will enable African States Parties to fully embrace the program.

Chairperson,

3. The Africa Programme was established in 2007 and designed with the main objective of supporting African States Parties in the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and to address their needs and priorities in relation to the Convention.

4. Over the past eighteen (18) years since the inception of the Africa Programme, the Group has witnessed cumulative progress from one phase to another. The Technical Secretariat has continued to identify special projects for the Programme. The tangible progress in the Programme's implementation can be attributed to the 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.

5. The Group notes the continued effort of the Technical Secretariat in initiating and implementing tailor-made programmes-focusing on the needs and aspirations of States Parties, including enhancing the capacities of chemical laboratories and centres of excellence in Africa. The Group recognises the support of the Technical Secretariat and other collaborating partners to this endeavour which will contribute to the expansion of the OPCW-

designated laboratories network to all regions and strengthening States Parties capabilities to implement the CWC in responding to any use or threat of use of Chemical Weapons.

6. The Group believes that continuous 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 appreciates the organisation of the various capacity-building programmes being implemented in the African continent under the sixth phase of the Africa Programme, notably on chemical safety and security under Article XI, enhancement of National Implementation of the Convention under Article VII and for the scheduled upcoming activities under the Programme. The Group notes with appreciation the regular review and assessment by the Technical Secretariat that allows the National Authorities and participants of the capacity-building programmes to provide feedback on lessons learned.

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

8. The Group highly values that Emerging Technologies, especially Artificial Intelligence (AI) have become an integral part of the OPCW's agenda and, in this context, notes with appreciation the convening of the "First Global Conference on the Role of AI in advancing the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention", co-hosted by the Kingdom of Morocco and the Technical Secretariat in October 2024 in Rabat. This pioneering Conference explored both opportunities and risks that AI pose to the Convention and highlighted the need to harness its potential to strengthen States Parties' capabilities and to responsibly leverage AI in advancing the objectives of the Convention. The Group commends the efforts and initiatives of the Technical Secretariat to address this matter including the establishment of the Temporary Working Group of AI.

9. The Group underscores the importance of fully funding the Africa Programme under the regular budget of the OPCW in order to guarantee its sustainability and predictability. At present, the Africa Programme is partially funded under the regular budget and 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 sustaining the Africa Programme. However, 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. In the meantime, the Group encourages donors, including States Parties and International Organisations to continue supporting the Africa programme as well as all International Cooperation and Assistance projects and activities being carried out by the Organisation. The Group therefore calls for a year-on-year incremental coverage of this programme under the regular budget.

10. The Group notes with great satisfaction that the broad and inclusive consultations on the review and optimization of key performance indicators; the update of the list of programmatic activities; and the inclusion of emerging technologies in chemical safety and security management and chemical emergency response offerings that have allowed the development of a robust concept note of the 7th phase programme.
11. Building on the experience gained and progress achieved in the previous phases of the Programme, the 7th Phase calls on the African States Parties and all stakeholders to join forces with the Technical Secretariat to realize the goals of the Programme over the next 3 years. The continued support by Programme Partners and donors is essential for the continued effective implementation and success of the Programme.
12. Chairperson, in conclusion, the Group reiterates its commitment to continue working with the Technical Secretariat and other States Parties for the successful implementation of the Africa Programme.
13. The Group requests that this statement be published as an official document of this session on the catalyst and the OPCW website.
14. I thank you for your kind attention.