

STATEMENT ON THE OPCW AFRICA PROGRAMME DELIVERED BY THE DEPUTY COORDINATOR OF THE AFRICAN GROUP, H.E. Mr LAMBERT DUSHIMIMANA, AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF RWANDA TO THE ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS (OPCW) ON THE OCCASION OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND ELEVENTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

(THE HAGUE, 10- 13 March 2026)

Chairperson,

1. At the outset, the Group commends the Director-General, H.E. Mr. Fernando Arias and the entire team of the Technical Secretariat for their dedication and commitment to the facilitation of the implementation of the OPCW Programme for Africa. The importance of this programme on the journey towards the full implementation of the convention cannot be understated.
2. The Group further underscores its appreciation for the work of the Steering Committee under the constructive leadership of Her Excellency Mrs. Madeleine Liguemoh Ondoua, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Cameroon to the OPCW.

**Mr. Chairperson,**

The Africa Programme was established in 2007 with the main objective of supporting African States Parties in the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) to address their needs and priorities. The programme continues to be one of the most important frameworks in which State parties can develop and strengthen their capacities that are crucial in ensuring the full implementation of the Convention.

3. Since its inception, 19 years ago, the Group has witnessed cumulative progress under each phase through Capacity-building activities aimed at enhancing national implementation of the Convention. In this regard, The Group commends the successful conclusion of the Sixth phase of the Programme.
4. The group notes the continued efforts of the Technical Secretariat in initiating and implementing tailor-made programmes focusing on the needs and aspirations of States Parties, including enhancing capacities of chemical laboratories and centres of excellence in Africa. The Group eagerly looks forward to more designated laboratories in Africa with adequate capacities to maintain their designated status.

5. The Group therefore welcomes the course co-organised at the National Institute of Criminalistics and Criminology (NICC-GN) from 7th to 11th December 2025 in Algeria and the OPCW on laboratory equipment maintenance, held for the first time in Africa. Therefore, the group looks forward to regular conduct of similar programmes in Africa.
6. The Group welcomes the ongoing working group initiatives to prevent the reemergence of the chemical weapons. Building on the outcomes and the lessons learned from CHEMEX-AFRICA I held in Algiers, the Group eagerly anticipates the organization of CHEMEX AFRICA II and CHEMEX GRULAC. The Group wishes to thank all States Parties that continue to support activities aiming to reinforce the capabilities of African State Parties in countering Chemical Terrorism.
7. The Group attaches great importance to Emerging Technologies and considers it opportune for the OPCW to elaborate a comprehensive strategy on the various applications of these technologies, in particular Artificial Intelligence. Building upon the outcomes and recommendations from the first Global Conference on the role of AI in advancing the implementation of the CWC, held in Rabat, in October 2024, the Group is of the view that the Africa Programme should include more capacity building activities relating to Emerging Technologies and the responsible use of AI.
8. The Group also welcomes the Integrated Advanced Course and Exercise on Assistance and Protection against Chemical Weapons organized under the OPCW's Africa Programme held in Tunis in September–October 2025 for French-speaking African States Parties. The event aimed to strengthen national and regional capacities for chemical emergency preparedness and response.

**Mr. Chairperson,**

9. The Group reiterates its appreciation to the State Parties that continue to make voluntary contributions to the Programme and underscores the importance of fully funding the Africa Programme under the regular budget of the OPCW in order to guarantee its sustainability and predictability. 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 the comprehensive 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.

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 7th phase of the Africa Programme. The Group also underscores the importance of building upon the experience gained and progress achieved in the previous phases of the Programme to achieve greater results with the aim of equipping African State Parties with tools to face emerging challenges.

11. The Group requests that this statement be published as an official document of this session on the catalyst and the OPCW website.

I thank you for your kind attention.