



**STATEMENT DELIVERED ON BEHALF OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
ON THE OCCASION OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND ELEVENTH SESSION OF
THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (EC-111)
THE HAGUE, 10 TO 13 MARCH 2026**

Chairperson, Your Excellency Ambassador and the Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr Thomas Schieb,
Director-General, Your Excellency Ambassador Fernando Arias,
Excellencies and Distinguished delegates,
Senior Members of the Technical Secretariat,

Mr Chairperson on behalf of the delegation of South Africa, I would like to assure you, of our unwavering support, commitment, and cooperation during this session.

South Africa associates itself with the statement delivered by Her Excellency, Ambassador Liuemoh Ondoua Madelene, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Cameroon, on behalf of the Group of African States Parties ("The Africa Group), as well as the statement delivered by Her Excellency, Ambassador Mirjam Blaak, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Uganda on behalf of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention that are Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement and China.

We thank the Director-General for his comprehensive report and express our gratitude to the staff of the Technical Secretariat for dedication in exercising their duties.

The global landscape regarding chemical weapons is currently defined by a sharp, accelerating divergence: while elimination of declared and verified stockpiles has been completed, the norm against their use is facing severe erosion due to the current geopolitical conflicts.

It is reported that chemical weapons have resurfaced as a covert tool in modern geopolitical conflict, challenging the Convention and the norm against their use. The Organisation must guard against erosion of established international security norm by strengthening its focus on preventing the re-emergence of such weapons.

The Organisation is navigating an increasingly politicised environment where geopolitics adversely impacts the enforcement of the Convention. The geopolitical strain on the Organisation impedes fair, impartial and consistent implementation of the Convention. It is therefore imperative to preserve the integrity of the Organisation, uphold multilateralism and defend international norms and principles for realisation of global peace and security.

The advancements in emerging technology particularly drone technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI) have created new risks for chemical incidents. The persistent threat of terrorists obtaining or using chemical agents is exacerbated by the potential use of these tools by terrorist to deliver chemical agents. Through the Centre for Chemistry and Technology and the Scientific Advisory Board, the OPCW should continue to leverage new tools for detection, verification, and non-proliferation.

The Organisation through the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism continues to promote awareness among Member States and partners with international bodies to build capacity in preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons, particularly in the context of chemical incidents, possible acts of chemical terrorism and advanced technologies. Commitment of the Technical Secretariat to support CHEMEX AFRICA II and CHEMEX GRULAC I, as well as implementation of the Open-Ended Working Group Action Plan will give impetus to the strides of Working Group.

South Africa welcomes the resolution adopted by consensus during the 30th Session of the Conference of the States Parties mandating the Executive Council to consider and decide on the reinstatement of Syria's rights and privileges based on the information regarding the progress in the destruction of remnants of chemical weapons dossier. Accordingly, South Africa is cognisant of the fact that reinstatement of Syria's rights and privileges requires Syria's continued cooperation with the Technical Secretariat and full compliance with its obligations as per conditions stipulated in paragraph 5 of the EC 94 decision (EC-94/DEC.2). Therefore, South Africa is of the view that as part of its mechanism of decision making, the Executive Council should adopt a set of measurable positive steps by which Syria's progress would be measured to determine the level of reinstatement of its suspended rights and privileges on a progressive basis.

My delegation also welcomes the decision by the 30th Session of the Conference of the States Parties to extend the mandate of the Open-Ended Working Group on the rules of procedures governing the election of members to the Executive Council without any change to its format and to report on its work to the 31st Session of the Conference of States Parties. It is our firm believe that the existing format enables inclusive participation and open discussions among States Parties, with a view to finding common ground on the proper interpretation of the rules of procedure for the elections, which safeguards the rights of States Parties to exercise their sovereign rights to choose which State Party to vote for without undue procedural impositions. To this end, South Africa is of the firm view that the concurrent combination of written

submissions and plenary discussions by all States Parties and bilateral discussion between regional groups, or smaller groupings of States can lead to a consensus-based outcome.

South Africa notes the progress made by China and Japan in the destruction of abandoned chemical weapons (ACWs) in China, demonstrating their commitment to fulfilling their obligations under the Convention. South Africa reiterates that dialogue and cooperation of the two affected States Parties will impact positively on the quest to rid the world of existing old and abandoned chemical weapons and any new discoveries of such weapons, wherever they may exist.

My delegation welcomes the launch of the Seventh Phase of the OPCW Africa Programme which is envisaged to build on the achievements of previous phases. South Africa emphasises the importance of continuity and further progress and reiterates the importance of funding the Africa Programme under the regular budget of the OPCW.

The universality of the Convention requires global adherence to ensure that chemical weapons are completely eliminated, as their continued existence anywhere poses a threat. Any territory that falls outside the area of jurisdiction of the CWC represents a potential limitation to its effectiveness, ability to reinforce prevention of proliferation and deny access to chemicals by non-State actors. We support all efforts to achieve universality and urge states that are not Parties to join the Convention at the earliest.

Chairperson

In closing, we would like to request that this statement be recorded as an official document of this Session and published on catalyst and the external server of the OPCW.

