

**STATEMENT BY HON. PAPA OWUSU-ANKOMAH, MINISTER FOR
EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND SPORTS AND LEADER OF GHANA'S DELEGATION
TO THE 11TH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES OF THE
CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION (CWC)**

**THE HAGUE - NETHERLANDS
DECEMBER 5 - 8, 2006**

Mr. Chairman

Distinguished Delegates

I bring you warm and sincere greetings from the Government and People of Ghana. I personally also heartily congratulate you Mr. Chairman on your election to preside over this all-important 11th Session of the Conference of States Parties.

This Session is of great significance because of two major events, namely the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the coming into force of the Convention in April 2007 and the Second Review Conference.

I also take this opportunity to congratulate your predecessor Ambassador Jose Antonio Arrospe of Peru for the able manner he steered the affairs of the 10th Session of the Conference of States Parties.

A cardinal principle in the pursuance of Ghana's foreign policy is the great importance the Government of Ghana attaches to fulfilling the country's international obligations. Ghana demonstrated this by its keen interest in the Chemical Weapons Convention by immediately signing the text of the Convention when it was opened for signature in 1993. This was followed by the ratification of the Convention in July 1997.

My very presence at this 11th Session is an ample and clear testimony of the importance we attach to the Convention and its core obligations particularly its domestication through national legislation.

Mr. Chairman,

We wish to reaffirm our declaration that Ghana is not a possessor state. Nevertheless, we are also not oblivious of our international obligations given the prevailing global environment marked by ever-increasing insecurity and the threat posed by terrorism through the use of chemical weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Ghana is

therefore committed to the universality of the Convention and the non-proliferation as pursued by the UN Security Council.

The Ghana Ministry of Education, Science and Sports is currently the designated focal point for the CWC. The Ghana National Authority, which was established in 1998 with representation from various sector Agencies, whose work are considered relevant to the country's obligations under the CWC, is therefore under the Ministry's jurisdiction. The Authority's membership has recently been expanded to include the Food and Drugs Board, a representative of all the Universities of Ghana and the Ministry of National Security, as their mandates relate to the core obligations of the Chemical Weapons Convention in Ghana.

Mr. Chairman

Despite the absence of specific chemical weapons legislation Ghana has laws for the control and management of chemicals as stipulated in the Environmental Protection Agency Act of 1994 (Act 490) and Pesticides Control and Management Act of 1996 (Act 528). These require the issuance of Permits to import all chemicals as well as for Clearance Certificates to clear them from the ports of entry. Any individual who contravenes these provisions is liable to face a penalty.

In July 2006 Ghana submitted to the OPCW Legal Workshop for National Authorities in Central and West Africa held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, a Draft Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Act. The Draft covers Ghana's international obligations in biological, chemical and nuclear weapons, including the country's obligations to enact national legislation and implementation measures under the Convention. The Technical Secretariat's comments are being incorporated into the Draft Act.

Mr. Chairman,

As I have outlined above, Ghana is committed to meeting its obligations under the Convention. The challenges faced by Ghana and other developing countries have been severally chronicled in reports by the Director-General, the Technical Secretariat and in the African Group's statements as well as in statements by the Non-Aligned Movement and China. I urge the Conference to provide whatever assistance it could possibly give to countries that may have delayed in fully meeting their obligations. I wish to assure you Mr. Chairman that this is not due to a lack of political will but rather the fact that we face myriad pressing needs and challenges.

The assistance provided by the International Cooperation and Assistance (ICA) Unit under the Technical Secretariat goes a long way in assisting countries such as mine in boosting our capacities to effectively implement our obligations. Over the past year Ghana has participated in a number of training programmes, workshops and seminars organized by the OPCW with the aim of building upon its capacity in the chemical sector.

The ICA programmes have been immensely beneficial and have further enhanced the performance of the Ghana National Authority and other agencies allied to the country's chemical industry. We are deeply grateful for such support.

We call for the Organization's increased support for its International Cooperation and Assistance programmes.

Mr. Chairman,

Ghana like other African States Parties to the OPCW, reaffirms its conviction that the establishment of an OPCW Regional Office in Africa would contribute in no small way to deepening Africa's commitment as well as the achievement of universality of the Convention on the continent.

I therefore entreat States Parties who may have reservations relating to the establishment of the Office to reconsider their position in the light of the obvious benefits to Africa.

We encourage the Conference to extend for additional year its Decision for the Technical Secretariat to follow up efforts for the establishment of the Africa Office. We laud States Parties which have expressed and continue to express their support for the establishment of the Office.

Mr. Chairman,

The Government and people of Ghana are thankful to States Parties which have offered, and continue to offer, assistance in one form or the other to Ghana through the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW. As a State Party and member of the Executive Council of the OPCW, Ghana is totally committed to the full realization of the aims and objectives of the Convention and to the total elimination of chemical weapons globally. Ghana will therefore do all within its power in collaboration with like-minded States Parties to bring this about.

We call on States Parties to contribute positively to the success of the Second Review Conference in the spirit of consensus and collaboration that has been the hallmark of this Organization.

We suggest that all States Parties consider organizing local activities to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the coming into force of the Convention.

On the issue of destruction, Ghana calls on all declared possessor States to abide by the extended deadlines for the destruction of Schedule One chemical weapons and the conversion of chemical weapons facilities as further extensions would put the credibility and integrity of the Convention at stake.

Finally Mr. Chairman I wish to commend the host country for the constructive position it has taken with regard to the concerns of States Parties as expressed through the Host Country Committee.

We also extol the Director General for his able stewardship and the good work he is doing. Mr. Director-General, we wish you a successful tenure of office and assure you, the Technical Secretariat and all States Parties, of the fullest support and co-operation of the Government and People of Ghana.

I wish us all fruitful deliberations and a very successful Conference.

Thank you.