

SOUTH AFRICAN EMBASSY

40 Wassenaarseweg,
2596 CJ The Hague

FAX NUMBER: 070-3460669

TELEPHONENUMBER: 070-3924501

WEBSITE ADDRESS: www.southafrica.nl



ZUID-AFRIKAANSE AMBASSADE

Wassenaarseweg 40,
2596 CJ Den Haag

FAXNUMMER: 070-3467336

TELEFOONNUMMER: 070-7507625

E-MAIL ADRES: multilateral@zuidafrika.nl

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR HLENGIWE B MKHIZE
SOUTH AFRICAN AMBASSADOR TO THE NETHERLANDS**

TO THE

**GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 11TH SESSION OF THE
CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES TO THE
CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION**

5 DECEMBER 2006

Mr. Chairperson,

The South African delegation would like to congratulate you on your election as Chairperson of the 11th session of the Conference of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention. I would like to assure you of our full cooperation and support for your efforts to guide this session's work to a successful conclusion.

My delegation would also like to acknowledge and thank the outgoing chairperson, Ambassador Jose Antonio Arrospe of Peru, for his leadership and the outstanding manner in which he guided the work of the 10th session of the Conference of States Parties.

My delegation would like to express its appreciation to the Director-General for his statement, which provides a clear and comprehensive overview of the status of the Convention and the Organisation.

Allow me also to thank the Technical Secretariat for its hard work in organising this session of the Conference of States Parties as well as the support provided to Member States in the run-up to this session.

Mr. Chairperson,

The South African delegation associates itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Non-aligned Movement by the representative of Cuba as well as that delivered by the representative of Sudan in his capacity as coordinator of the African Group.

The 11th session of the Conference has a number of important decisions to consider. One decision in particular demands our close scrutiny and careful consideration. As all Member States are aware, we have before us the extension requests submitted by the major possessor States in terms of the final destruction deadline for all their chemical weapons. These requests speak to the heart of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Should the Conference decide to grant these extensions, the next six years, up to 2012, will become a defining period in the history of the Chemical Weapons Convention, as well as the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

Of particular significance during this extension period will be the manner in which the major possessor States fulfill their obligations, as it will have a direct impact on the continued functioning and success of the Convention and the Organisation beyond 2012.

No other process, institution or mechanism in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation has come close to realising, in a similar manner, the destruction and prohibition of an entire category of weapons. For this to happen, however, all destruction activities should be completed within the deadlines determined by the Convention. This will not only place the Convention and OPCW's continuing successful operations beyond question, but will also ensure all Member States' continued commitment to the non-proliferation ideals of the Convention.

As mentioned during the 47th Session of the Executive Council, South Africa does not stand unsympathetic towards the realities and difficulties faced by the major possessor States in fully meeting their destruction obligations. My delegation further indicated during that

session that it would be in a position to give favourable consideration to the requests submitted by the major possessors for the extension of the 100% destruction deadline to 29 April 2012.

It would, however, be imperative in this regard that the major possessor States fully commit to preserving the integrity of the Chemical Weapons Convention by adhering to the 2012 deadline. The incentive provided by the final destruction deadline is a powerful tool to keep possessor States focused on their destruction efforts. Losing or diminishing this incentive would be a grave blow to the Convention and the OPCW.

Mr. Chairperson,

The South African delegation looks forward to the successful conclusion and adoption of the programme budget for 2007. We would like to commend the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat for the vigor with which they are pursuing responsible budgetary processes in the organisation. The negative growth budget

presented to States Parties, representing an almost 1,7% reduction in the over-all budget, is commendable.

My delegation, however, believes continuous zero-nominal growth and especially negative growth budgets, is not in the best interest of the Organisation. This is particularly in view of the fact that the OPCW still has much to do in terms of pending destruction activities as well as providing assistance to States Parties. Where savings are realised through responsible budgeting processes, it would be more prudent to allow States Parties the opportunity to identify, with the assistance of the Technical Secretariat, programmes and activities that could be strengthened by utilizing these savings.

Mr. Chairperson,

An issue that is of particular concern to the South African Delegation is the establishment of an OPCW Office in Africa. We would like to extend our appreciation to Mr. Andres Rugeles of Colombia, for his efforts to advance this matter. We would encourage him to continue to work closely with the African Group, as well as, other interested

States Parties in order to ensure that this Office is established as soon as possible.

It is particularly important for the future Office to have a close working relationship with the African Union, including AU structures such as the Peace and Security Council and the AU Commission. This would provide the office with the legitimacy it requires as well as a sense familiarity and buy-in that is necessary for successful cooperation and assistance.

It is important that this Office not be established just for the sake of it, but to truly assist African States in implementing the provisions of the Convention.

Mr. Chairperson,

My delegation would like to reiterate the importance it attaches to the principle of equitable geographical representation in terms of the recruitment of personnel for the Technical Secretariat as well as

ensuring a favourable gender balance, especially by appointing more women to senior positions.

We appeal to the Director-General to pay specific attention to the appointment of African nationals in the Technical Secretariat in a balanced and representative manner. A significant number of States Parties is from the African Region and we would urge the Director-General to take special measures to ensure that this reality is reflected in the composition of the Technical Secretariat, not only in numbers but also in terms of seniority.

Mr. Chairperson,

The South African delegation looks forward to the tenth anniversary in 2007, of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention as well as participating in the preparations and activities planned by the Technical Secretariat. We would appeal to the Director-General to use this opportunity to reach out to States Parties, particularly from developing regions, not only through commemorative activities but also through increased cooperation and assistance programmes. The

full implementation of the Convention will be much sooner realised through cooperation, assistance and tangible benefits to Member States, than coercion and sanctions.

Finally Mr. Chairperson,

My delegation acknowledges the activities that have commenced, under the leadership of Ambassador Lyn Parker of the United Kingdom, in preparation for the second review conference scheduled for 2008. The South African delegation looks forward to participating actively and constructively in this process during the coming year.

Mr. Chairperson,

The South African delegation looks forward to the successful consideration and conclusion of the programme of work of this 11th session under your able leadership.

Thank you