

STATEMENT BY MS TDG MOLABA

**DIRECTOR: DISARMAMENT AND NON-PROLIFERATION
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
SOUTH AFRICA**

**GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 13TH SESSION OF THE
CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES TO THE
CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION**

2 DECEMBER 2008

Mr. Chairperson,

The South African delegation would like to congratulate you on your election as Chairperson of the 13th 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 Idris of Sudan, for his leadership and the outstanding manner in which he guided the work of the 12th session of the Conference of States Parties.

The South African delegation expresses 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.

Mr. Chairperson,

The South African delegation associates itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Non-aligned Movement and China by the representative of Cuba, as well as with the statement delivered on behalf of the African Group.

The 13th session of the Conference is our first opportunity in this configuration to build on the successful outcome of the Second Review Conference of the Convention.

My delegation welcomes the progress which has been made by States Parties on the implementation of Article VII, particularly on the African Continent. However, we wish to highlight the importance of providing the necessary assistance to States Parties that are experiencing difficulties in implementing national implementation measures.

My delegation reiterates the importance of the full implementation of Article XI through the development of concrete measures within an agreed framework. We also support the holding of a workshop in 2009 which would assist States Parties in identifying such concrete measures as well as other elements towards the full implementation of Article XI.

Mr. Chairperson,

South Africa would like to reiterate the importance of all destruction activities being completed within the deadlines determined by the Convention as we regard the destruction of all chemical weapons as the primary objective of the Convention. We call on States Parties who possess chemical weapons to

pursue all means possible in order to ensure the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles within the agreed extended deadlines. In this regard, we would like to congratulate A State Party on having successfully completed the destruction of their chemical weapons stockpile.

My delegation looks forward to the successful conclusion of consultations on the 2009 Programme and Budget. In this regard we are disappointed at the unwillingness of States Parties, particularly major contributors, to maintain a zero-nominal growth budget for the 2009 cycle. We believe the negative growth budget which it seems we will be approving does not send a positive message about our commitment to the Organisation and the successful manner in which it is fulfilling its mandate. This negative message is further exacerbated by the fact that the additional amount which would be required from States Parties to maintain a zero-nominal growth budget is a mere fraction of their annual contributions and would be off-set more than ten times by the savings which they will be receiving back next year in terms of the 2006 cycle.

The South African delegation is also concerned about the negative effect which the late payment of annual assessments, particularly by some major contributors, is having on the implementation of the Organisation's programme of work. We stress the importance of paying annual contributions on time, in full and without any conditions.

Mr. Chairperson,

My delegation would like to thank the Technical Secretariat for the efforts they are undertaking to implement the Programme for Africa. These efforts need to be further intensified in order to identify and initiate new additional initiatives which could contribute directly to building capacity and transferring skills to African States Parties and to assist them with the implementation of the Convention.

Furthermore, 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, particularly in the professional ranks of the Organisation, as well as ensuring a favourable gender balance.

Mr. Chairperson,

During this year, South Africa hosted several successful events in collaboration with the OPCW. Perhaps the most important of these, was the first Basic Course for the National Authorities of African States Parties which took place in Tshwane from 22 to 26 September 2008 and which was attended by representatives from 22 States Parties. This was the first Basic Course to be held on the African continent and was the first to be held exclusively for African States Parties.

South Africa looks forward to cooperating further with the OPCW in this regard to promote the aims of the Convention on the African continent.

Mr. Chairperson,

The South African delegation looks forward to the successful consideration and conclusion of the programme of work of this 13th session under your able leadership.

Thank you