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RWANDA

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR IMMACULEE UWANYILIGIRA
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF RWANDA TO THE OPCW AT THE
SEVENTEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,
Director General,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Mr Chairperson,

On behalf of my delegation, allow me to seize this opportunity, to congratulate you upon your assumption of the Chair of the Seventeenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties (CSP) and to assure you of my delegation's full support and collaboration. I am confident that under your capable leadership, evinced by your previous skilful stewardship of the last Executive Council (EC), our deliberations will be brought to a successful and timely conclusion.

I wish to also recognise the tremendous contribution of your predecessor, Ambassador Paul Arkwright of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland, for his admirable consensus building an adept steering of the proceedings during challenging and delicate negotiations of the last Conference of the States Parties.

Having just concluded commemorative events celebrating the achievements of the OPCW in its fifteen years of existence, may I congratulate our Director-General, Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü for his remarkable contribution to the Organisation in its continued implementation of the Convention.

My delegation associates itself with the statement of the Africa Group, delivered by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Sudan, and the statement of the Non-Aligned Movement and China, delivered by the Deputy for International Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

My delegation has taken note of the opening statement by the Director-General on the activities of the Organisation and wishes to express its deepest appreciation for the tremendous work undertaken by the Director-General and his dedicated team at the Technical Secretariat. Rwanda also welcomes all the new appointments to the Senior Management Team of the Technical Secretariat.



It is my honour to inform the Conference that in Rwanda's continued efforts to adhere to the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, Rwanda's Lower House of Parliament, on 16 May this year, approved the law on the Convention and passed it on to the Senate. This legislation was then approved by the Senate on 6 July, paving the way for its domestication. The final phase of this process was the promulgation of this legislation by the President of the Republic for it to enter into force as a law. I am pleased to announce to this session of the Conference, that the President of the Republic of Rwanda, H.E Paul Kagame, promulgated the law on 30 August 2012 as Law Number 32/2012, which was published in the Official Gazette No. 46 of 12 November 2012. Henceforth, The National Law on the Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and use of Chemical Weapons and their Distribution is now operational, making Rwanda the fiftieth State Party to the Convention to do so.

The domestication of the Convention is a landmark achievement and a clear demonstration of Rwanda's commitment to its international obligations. Rwanda is committed to continuing to work closely with all States Parties to achieve the ultimate objective of this Organisation, which is, a world free of chemical weapons.

My delegation seizes this opportunity to appreciate the continued support of the Technical Secretariat to strengthen cooperation, reaffirms its full commitment to the continued application and reinforcement of the national measures necessary to ensure full implementation of the Convention, and reiterates its readiness to cooperate and promote the exchange of information and experience with other States Parties to facilitate this process.

To this end my delegation is pleased with the various workshops and training sessions conducted on the implementation of Article XI, which were attended by Rwandan participants, notably the sixteenth training course on National Authority and Chemical Databases (NACD), that was conducted in Helsinki from 13-24 August 2012 at the Finnish Institute for Verification of the Chemical Weapons Convention (VERIFIN); the training course for instructors that took place in The Hague from 10-16 November 2012; and the Third Annual Summer Program on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction in a Changing World, that was also conducted in The Hague from 2-7 September 2012. The feedback from our participants as well as our National Authority to all the workshops and seminars is very encouraging.

This session being the first one since the expiration of the final extended deadline, notwithstanding the difficulties outlined in meeting this deadline by possessor States, Rwanda welcomes the goodwill demonstrated by possessor States, based on current efforts underway and the newly-established schedules for completion of the destruction of the remaining stockpiles. Rwanda reiterates its firm conviction that the destruction of all chemical weapons remains a core objective of this Organisation and looks forward to a close monitoring to ensure that clear milestones are established in order for the process to stay on track.

As the Canadian communications theorist, futurist and philosopher, Marshall McLuhan once so aptly said, "There are no passengers on Spaceship Earth. We are all crew." States Parties, whether possessor States, abandoning States or those with a nascent chemical industry like mine, all have to renew our commitment to ensure the full implementation of the Convention. Variously put, to borrow the words of my favourite philosopher, Edmund Burke "All that is necessary for the forces of evil to triumph in the world, is for enough good men to do

nothing”. Fellow representatives of States Parties, we all bear the responsibility to act – responsibly.

I thank you, and request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Seventeenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties.

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