



FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

STATEMENT BY MR. CHUKA UDEDIBIA, DEPUTY HEAD OF MISSION, EMBASSY OF NIGERIA, THE HAGUE, NETHERLANDS, AT THE SEVENTEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES TO THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION, THE HAGUE, 26TH – 30TH NOVEMBER, 2012

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the Nigerian delegation, I wish to congratulate you on your assumption of the Chair of the Seventeenth Conference of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention. The Nigerian delegation wishes to assure you of its full support and cooperation in the tasks ahead as you lead us on the path to fruitful deliberations. We have full confidence in you, borne out of your successful chairmanship of the Executive Council, and your rich experience and dedication to the task of achieving the full implementation of Chemical Weapons Convention. Permit me, Mr. Chairman, to express our appreciation, through you, to the out-going Chairperson, Ambassador Paul Arkwright of the United Kingdom, for piloting the affairs of the last Conference of States Parties to a successful outcome.

My delegation fully aligns itself with the statements delivered by Ambassador Akhondzadeh, the Deputy Minister for International Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, on behalf of the Non-Aligned States Parties and China. Similarly, we wish to fully associate ourselves with the statement delivered by Ambassador Sirajuddin Hamid Yousif of Sudan on behalf of the Africa Group.

Let me also, through you, Mr. Chairman, thank the Director-General, Mr. Ahmet Uzumcu, for his opening statement on the activities of OPCW. I would like to commend him and his team for the efficient manner in which they have conducted the affairs of the Organization.

Mr. Chairperson,

As we mark the 15th anniversary of the entry into force of Chemical Weapons Convention, I wish to reaffirm Nigeria's commitment to the full implementation of this important disarmament instrument, and our support for its purposes and objectives. The Nigerian delegation would like to stress the importance of compliance by States Parties with the provisions of CWC, in particular the need for the destruction of existing stockpiles of chemical weapons by possessor States. While commending the progress made so far in the destruction process, we find it regrettable, however, that the final extended deadline of 29 April 2012 for the destruction of remaining stockpiles of chemical weapons in the arsenals of concerned States Parties could not be met. While welcoming the spirit demonstrated towards destroying the remaining stockpiles, Nigeria urges the possessor States Parties concerned to ensure the total destruction of all their remaining stockpiles at the earliest possible date.

We acknowledge with a great deal of satisfaction that substantial progress has been made in general over the past 15 years towards the overall attainment of the objective of the Convention. Apart from the need for the destruction of remaining stockpiles by States that could not meet the final extended deadline, other challenges, however, continue to beckon for our attention including the continued need for universality of the Convention, and that of national implementation bearing in mind that only 88 of 188 States Parties have enacted implementation legislation in key areas. This is in addition to the challenge of the threat that the possibility of acquisition of these weapons by non-State Parties and non-States actors poses to international community, requiring that all Member States of the United Nations should comply with UN Security Council Resolution 1540 of 2004 against accessibility of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems to non-State actors.

In this regard, my delegation wishes to underscore the need for establishment of a strong link between the disarmament and non-proliferation efforts of OPCW with those of the UN Security Council particularly its Counter-

Terrorism Committee. We see this as important while acknowledging the ongoing cooperative arrangements with the United Nations as a whole.

It is for these and other reasons that we agree with the view that the Third Review Conference coming up in April next year should focus on achieving a world free of chemical weapons, along with universality of the Convention, a robust verification mechanism, a strong cooperative relationship with chemical industry, a treaty regime that is both flexible enough to respond to a changing scientific environment particularly the emerging convergence of chemistry and biology, and a treaty regime that is authoritative enough to command universal respect and support. In this context, we also agree with the view that States Parties could use the Third Review Conference to re-commit themselves to achieving the goals of the CWC, critically evaluate their collective and national implementation efforts and consider whether any re-orientation of the work of the OPCW is required.

Mr. Chairman,

Since becoming a State Party, Nigeria has strongly supported all efforts to achieve the fundamental objectives of the CWC to prohibit the production, acquisition, stockpiling, retention, transfer and use of chemical weapons, as well as their total destruction within a time-bound framework. Nigeria also attaches great importance to the fulfilment of Article X, which seeks to provide assistance and protection against the threat or use of chemical weapons, and of Article XI that promotes the peaceful uses of chemistry and the exchange of scientific and technical information.

During the 16th Conference of States Parties, the Nigerian delegation focused its statement on Article XI, expressing the great importance it attaches to the issue of International Cooperation and Assistance (ICA), especially as it relates to the programme to strengthen cooperation with Africa namely the Africa Programme. My delegation continues to attach great importance to the work of ICA especially with regard to the needs of Africa. As you are aware, the 16th CSP adopted a decision regarding four components of an agreed framework for the full implementation of Article XI and requested the Technical Secretariat to report to the Conference at each annual session on the progress of concrete measures undertaken in implementing the decision, and

on the status of implementation of Article XI. In the view of my delegation, the Director-General's Report dated 26 September 2012 is quite encouraging.

It is indeed gratifying to note that in 2012 in the course of its implementation of the second phase of Africa Programme, the Secretariat continued to organize activities aimed at providing tailor-made and focused, support in Africa, activities designed to meet the needs of States Parties in the region in enhancing their national capacities for more effective implementation of the Convention. Just as gratifying is the part of the report indicating that the flagship Associate Programme provided 44% of its places to personnel from African States Parties, an initiative that has continued to attract great interest and a considerable number of applicants from Africa. We urge States Parties and regional organizations that have supported these activities in a voluntary manner under the auspices of the Africa Programme, to continue to do so. Based on the success recorded in the implementation of the Africa Programme, my delegation wishes to use this opportunity to appeal for its continuation in a sustainable way, possibly in a continuous rolling cycle of three years each, well beyond 31 December 2013, the date that the second phase is expected to end.

Mr. Chairman,

The Nigerian delegation is also delighted to note the following positive developments since the last CSP as already outlined by the distinguished Ambassador of Sudan on behalf of the African Group:

- the rightful placement of the International Cooperation Assistance (ICA) Programme, alongside other important operational programmes and activities;
- the newly-introduced Strategy and Policy Sub-Programme
- the reduction of number of Executive Council Meetings from four to three per year;
- the agreement reached on the OPCW Programme and Budget for 2013;
- the amendment of the OPCW Staff Regulations in line with other international organisations.

Before I conclude, permit me to commend Ambassador Nassima Baghli of Algeria for her tireless effort in the work of the Open-ended Working Group for the Third Review Conference as the Chairperson of that subsidiary body. While

commending the progress made so far, it is our wish that the views of my delegation for a robust Third Review Conference will be taken into account.

I wish to request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the 17th Session of the Conference of States Parties.

I thank you.