

**STATEMENT BY THE HONOURABLE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT,
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION, DR. BERNICE ADIKU HELOO, AT
THE EITHEENTH (18TH) SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES
PARTIES TO THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVETION (CWC), THE HAGUE,
NETHERLANDS**

2ND – 6TH DECEMBER, 2013

Mr. Chairperson,

Your Excellences

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Kindly allow me, on the onset, to congratulate you on your election as Chairperson of the Eighteenth (18th) Session of the Conference of the States Parties.

My delegation is confident that you will steer our work to a successful end, and we assure you of our full cooperation and support in this direction.

Let me also register my delegation's appreciation to the outgoing Chairperson, H.E. Mr. Peter Goosen, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of South Africa, for his efforts as Chair of the Seventeenth Session of the Conference of States Parties.

Mr. Chairman, my delegation fully associates itself with the statement made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and China by H.E. S.A. Araghchi, Deputy Minister for International Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the statement delivered on behalf of the African group.

I wish to express our heartfelt thanks to the Director-General (DG) of the organization, Ambassador Ahmed Uzumcu, for his Opening Statement and for the efficient manner in which he continues to manage the affairs of the organization.

I wish to also join other delegations to congratulate the DG on his re-appointment, and to re-assure him of my country's full support and cooperation in all his efforts.

Mr. Chairman

We acknowledge with a great deal of satisfaction that substantial progress has been made in general over the past 16 years towards the overall attainment of the objective of the Convention. Though 2013 has been particularly a challenging year for the Organization, my delegation is touched by the award of the prestigious Noble Peace prize for 2013 to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We congratulate the Organization and all states parties for this great achievement.

Mr. Chairman

Since 1997 when Ghana ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention, we have had significant developments in the national implementation of the Convention, even as we acknowledge that our trajectory could have been a bit more rapid and upward, to help in the attainment of the goals and objectives of the Convention at the national level.

Recognizing the upward adjustments in government's expenditure on the implementation framework towards this Convention, we cannot deny the fact that a lot more needs to be done for institutional collaboration, provision of infrastructure and building requisite human resource expertise for the operationalization of our imperatives to make a case for the pursuit of chemistry for peaceful purposes.

The Republic of Ghana as a State Party to the Convention continues to enjoy sound cooperation with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and we intend to keep such collaboration in a sustained manner, while we finalize the passage of our legislation after due consultation with all relevant stakeholders.

As part of efforts being made to expedite national implementation of the Convention, we intend to uphold the on-going sub-regional initiative and collaboration on development of our emergency-response capabilities against an attack or threat of attack with chemical weapons or involving toxic industrial chemicals. As part of this initiative, I am informed that, a series of training exercises for selected First National Responders have taken place in Krusevac, Serbia, and I wish to take this opportunity to thank the Government and People of Serbia for supporting and facilitating this programme under the guidance of the Technical Secretariat.

Mr. Chairman

I wish at this juncture to underscore and acknowledge the increasing number of Ghanaians benefitting from tailor-made programmes of OPCW in collaboration with some generous States Parties notably Finland, India, South Africa and the Federal Republic of Germany. A substantial number have also benefitted from activities sponsored by the Technical Secretariat. This has significantly enhanced individual and institutional capacities, helped in promoting best practices in chemical manufacturing and safety. It has also offered practical experience in analytical skills, and facilitated the exchange of scientific and technical information, among others. Additionally, the Gas Chromatography-Mass Spectrometer (GC-MS) donated by OPCW to the Water Research Institute in Ghana has tremendously improved the technical expertise of staff at the facility in their chemical analysis and monitoring responsibilities.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I wish on behalf of my delegation to commend, once again, the DG and all his staff for the professional manner the organization is being managed. I thank you for your kind attention.