

**20th Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the
Chemical Weapons Convention
Plenary Session**

2 December 2015

Implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention in Africa

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Mr. Chairperson, Director-General, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Good afternoon. My name is Noel Stott and I am a senior research fellow at the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) based in South Africa. ISS is an applied policy research and technical assistance institute working for the advancement of sustainable human security in Africa. We seek to influence decision makers within Africa and beyond and as such, we undertake applied policy research, provide teaching and training as well as technical assistance. Since 2007, one of our project's aims (with Norwegian funding) has been to enhance Africa's role in international efforts to strengthen weapons of mass destruction disarmament and non-proliferation in the context of Africa's developmental imperatives.

The near-universalisation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in Africa is a testament to the continent's commitment to ensuring that the misuse of dangerous chemicals never occurs in Africa or anywhere else in the world. We were pleased to see Angola becoming a State Party to the CWC this year, bringing the total number of OPCW Member States to 192 and we concur with the statement by Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü, Director-General of the OPCW, that "Angola's accession to the Convention brings this important treaty a further step towards complete universality". We share his "hope [that] this will encourage those countries which remain outside the Convention to join the global consensus against chemical weapons". Angola deposited its instrument of accession on 16 September 2015 and the Convention entered into force for it on 16 October 2015.

We therefore urge the remaining two African countries, Egypt and South Sudan, to join the CWC, which will reinforce the African Union's (AU) designation of Africa being a Chemical Weapons-Free Zone – which is underscored by the 2006 Memorandum of Understanding between the AU and the OPCW.

While universalization is important, so too is the effective implementation of the Convention in the existing African States Parties. In 2015, some progress has been made to increase the number of African States Parties with implementing legislation covering all key areas of the CWC, and to provide national authorities with the necessary financial and human resources to monitor appropriate implementation of the CWC.

The OPCW's Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa has accomplished a great deal over the years, enabling Africans to participate in training courses and workshops on relevant topics. The programme has also provided internship opportunities, offered support to attend CWC conferences (CSPs) and supplied functional equipment. As such, the OPCW's programmes yield direct economic benefits to a continent struggling to meet our national developmental goals. From our experience, engagement in Africa must promote both the developmental benefits as well as the security dimensions of CWC membership.

Strengthening the human resource pool of National Authorities in African Member States is crucial and the offer of internship programmes such as the programme in chemical engineering, currently being held at the Beijing University of Chemical Technology in Beijing, China, from September 2015 to February 2016 is welcome and indeed appreciated - as were the workshops on 'Security, the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and cooperative threat reduction in Africa', held in Pretoria, South Africa, from 2-6 March 2015 and hosted by the OPCW's Technical Secretariat and the US Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) and the training course for customs authorities on technical aspects of the transfers regime of the CWC held in collaboration with the World Customs Organization (WCO) in October 2015.

The complementary nature of the OPCW and African civil society's activities in promoting international peace and security should form the foundation for increased co-operation. Given the resource constraints faced by most African countries, the OPCW, together with African States Parties, the African Union (AU), sub-regional organisations, chemical industry and representatives from African civil society, should combine efforts and co-ordinate activities in order to make the best use of scarce resources and build sustainable processes. The ISS stands ready to create 'safe-spaces' for relevant stakeholders to discuss areas of mutual interest, determine priority areas and build the necessary knowledge base within African States.

Too often, the implementation of the various non-proliferation and counter-terrorism instruments tends to happen in silos, depriving national stakeholders from possible synergies and resulting in

duplication of efforts and a waste of scarce resources. ISS recently (14-15 September 2015) hosted, with the financial assistance of the UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), a workshop to assist the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) member states and the IGAD Secretariat, in particular its Security Sector Programme, in building chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) non-proliferation capacities, in the context of resolution 1540 (2004), the Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), as well as relevant international counter-terrorism conventions, such as the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM), the 2005 Amendment to the CPPNM, the 2005 International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT), the 2005 Protocol to the Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Fixed Platforms Located on the Continental Shelf, the 2005 Protocol to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Maritime Navigation, and the 2010 Convention on the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Relating to International Civil Aviation.

The workshop, which was organised in partnership with the IGAD Secretariat and the AU aimed to: raise awareness of the above-mentioned instruments and of the cross-cutting obligations stemming from them; promote their universalization; facilitate the exchange of experience and effective practices in implementation efforts; address coordination matters; and, discuss co-operation efforts at the sub-regional level.

Complementarities/overlaps/synergies between the CWC and these other international disarmament, non-proliferation and counter-terrorism instruments with CBRN dimensions need to be highlighted especially in a continent with scarce resources and overstretched person-power. As a means to promote implementation of the CWC in Africa, we propose that the OPCW continue to meet with, and co-ordinate with other bodies, such as the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organisation, the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 Committee, as well as the African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCON) – the oversight body for the Treaty of Pelindaba.

As stated last year in this hall, we continue to believe that it is important to take stock of whether all articles of the CWC are being implemented and whether the convention is achieving its goals, not only in Africa, but everywhere in the world. The OPCW must remain a genuinely multi-lateral forum where the decisions jointly made by States Parties are fully implemented. Any real or perceived political imbalances between Member States should continue to be addressed.

Finally, as an African civil society organisation, we are ready to partner with the OPCW to fulfil its mandate of ridding the world of chemical weapons. In this regard, we will continue to implement the co-operation agreement that we have with the OPCW (signed in July 2014) in order to collaborate in areas of mutual interest, including promoting awareness and universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in Africa, national implementation and comprehensive national legislation and the OPCW Programme for Africa as well as education and outreach.

We believe that better co-operation and co-ordination between the OPCW and African civil society (such as the ISS) will enhance Africa's engagement with the CWC and will support the goals of the OPCW's Programme for Africa.

Thank you, and I wish for this statement to be made part of the final CSP record and posted on the external server and website.