

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR MARY MARGARET MUCHADA,
HEAD OF THE ZIMBABWEAN DELEGATION TO THE
TWENTIETH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF STATES
PARTIES TO THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION (CWC):
30 NOVEMBER - 4 DECEMBER 2015**

Mr. Chairperson,

On behalf of the delegation of Zimbabwe, I extend to you our congratulations on your election as the Chairperson of the Twentieth Session of the Conference of States Parties to the CWC and in the same vein commend your predecessor Her Excellency Vesela Mrden Korać Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Croatia to the OPCW for her excellent performance as the Chairperson of the Nineteenth Session of the Conference of States Parties. Allow me to congratulate and welcome the other distinguished newly elected office bearers and in that regard assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

Mr. Chairperson,

Zimbabwe applauds the work being executed by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and would like to commend H.E. Mr. Ahmet Üzümcü, the Director General for his professional leadership of our organization as well as the Technical Secretariat for its supportive efforts to States Parties in the implementation of the CWC.

This delegation fully endorses and associates itself with the statements delivered by H.E Ambassador Alireza Jahangiri the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the OPCW on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement CWC States Parties and China and by H.E Ambassador Vusi Bruce Koloane the Permanent Representative of Republic of South Africa to the OPCW on behalf of the African Group.

Mr. Chairperson,

My delegation welcomes the auspicious decision by Myanmar and Angola to accede to the Convention as an important step in the direction that leads towards achieving the universality of the Convention and one that in our view, should spur the states remaining outside the CWC to join.

Zimbabwe remains steadfast in its support for the principled stance regarding complete destruction of chemical weapons as fundamental and of high priority, in particular the remaining chemical weapons stockpiles. Thus, while acknowledging the progress made so far, my delegation reaffirms the need for the Possessor States to follow through their declared commitments to destroy all their chemical weapons stockpiles within the planned deadlines.

In the context of national implementation of Article VI, my delegation urges the Technical Secretariat to continue to extend meaningful technical assistance and support at its disposal to

States Parties as well as developing tailored solutions that recognize the resource constraints or practical challenges confronting States Parties in meeting national dimensions of the implementation measures. My delegation underscores the imperative for the OPCW to actively support States Parties to develop their chemical industrial capabilities for peaceful purposes. It is therefore desirable and paramount that National Authorities be strengthened and afforded the requisite forms of technical assistance and support in the broader context of the implementation of the Convention.

Mr. Chairperson,

My delegation applauds the OPCW for co-organizing several regional and sub-regional workshops and courses notably within the context of the Programme for Africa on critical areas such as security, implementation of the convention and cooperative threat reduction and analytical chemistry in South Africa and chemical safety management for States Parties in Africa in Germany, just mention a few. Zimbabwe has benefitted immensely from these technical cooperation programmes and deeply appreciates the co-hosts, co-organizers and financiers of these activities whose achievements underscore the need for continued strengthening of the Programme on Africa with new priorities and implementation approaches.

Zimbabwe fully appreciates the immense work that has been performed under the Africa Programme. To this end, it fully

subscribes to statements earlier made by other delegations that have strongly recommended the continuation of the Programme after 2016. In our view, the successor Programme should be focusing on the identified needs of member states and their regions. Noting that some sub-regions in Africa have already carried out extensive consultations at sub-regional level, we recommend that the SADC sub-region be afforded the same opportunity to take stock of their burning issues. One that readily comes to mind is that of enhancing the customs agencies capacity in the handling of Schedule III chemicals either arising from and being traded within specific cluster industries. There is need to have well accounted for paper trail to enable us to trace abuses such as the recent poisoning of water points and fruit by would be poachers using cyanide, thereby endangering animal and human lives. We lost 23 head of elephants in a single instance and had to embark on extensive awareness campaign in order to protect humanbeings.

Zimbabwe stands ready to host such a stakeholder consultative meeting of SADC. We urge that the SADC Secretariat be informed soon of such developments in other sub- regions so that the views of the region are taken on board before the current Africa Programme activities are concluded. The matter should be treated with the urgency that it deserves since the 2016 review of the Programme is just round the corner.

As for the effective implementation of the Convention pursuant to Article X in the context of the ever-present and complex nature of

the threat of use of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals, it behoves all States Parties, especially developed countries to support greater international cooperation and capacity-building in the form of technology transfer, sharing materials and equipment for peaceful purposes. My delegation underscores the imperative for the States Parties and the OPCW to bolster capacity towards prevention and awareness of the threat and risks posed by chemical materials.

In this regard, we implore those States Parties with the means to enable the Technical Secretariat to timely deploy effective and sufficient assistance in response to the growing needs and demands of deficient States Parties. My delegation takes this opportunity to reiterate its request to the OPCW in December 2013 to consider organizing a workshop in Zimbabwe to raise awareness on the proper handling and use of toxic chemicals. The request was prompted by the sporadic misuse of cyanide by poachers to poison and kill elephants that has had catastrophic impact on human, animal and plant life as well as contamination of water sources and the environment.

Mr. Chairperson,

The implementation of Article XI is critical to the promotion of international cooperation towards economic development, enhancing security and buttressing national implementation of the provisions of the CWC. We therefore urge the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of this Article.

In conclusion, I request that this statement be issued as an official document of this session of Conference.