

STATEMENT BY THE GROUP OF AFRICAN STATES PARTIES TO THE CHEMICAL
WEAPONS CONVENTION DELIVERED BY KENYA'S PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE, H.E. AMBASSADOR ROSE MAKENA MUCHIRI,
TO THE TWENTY FIRST SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES
(CSP21)
THE HAGUE, THE NETHERLANDS, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 28TH, 2016

Mr. Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of African States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

I would like begin by welcoming and congratulating you, Ambassador Dr. Christoph Israng of Germany, as the Chair of the Twenty First Session of the Conference of the States Parties and express our confidence in your able leadership to steer this conference to a successful conclusion. The African Group would also like to express deep appreciation to the outgoing Chairperson of the previous Session of the Conference, Ambassador Eduardo Ibarrola-Nicolín of Mexico.

Along with you, Mr. Chairperson, I would also like to congratulate the other newly elected officials to this Session of the Conference.

The African Group fully associates with the Statement of Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and China, which was delivered by the Group's Coordinator, H.E. Haifa Aissami Madah, the Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the OPCW.

Mr. Chairperson

The African Group also wishes to express its gratitude to the Director-General, H. E. Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü, for his informative and comprehensive report delivered in this Session. The Group appreciates his continuous efforts and those of his team in the Technical Secretariat, in promoting the role of the Organization in the International Disarmament regime and ably carrying out its functions under the Convention.

Mr. Chairperson

Allow me to point out that the number of the African Countries that are members to the Chemical Weapons Convention now stands at 52. This is a clear demonstration of progression towards the universalization of the Convention in the Continent.

In this respect, therefore, the African Group wishes to note, with deep gratitude, the Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa on the Chemical Weapons Convention, also known as the Africa Programme. This is the signature Programme through which the Director General and the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW has

been engaging African State Parties in order to implement the Convention's objectives in the African Continent. Indeed, this Programme serves to highlight the complementary nature of the OPCW and the African Union's activities in promoting international peace and security through disarmament and non-proliferation.

The African Group notes and appreciates that the Technical Secretariat intends to continue in the next cycle with a Fourth Phase of the Programme, for another three-year period, which the Group hopes will be backed by regular budgetary allocations and less reliant on voluntary funding.

Mr. Chairperson

On chemical weapons' destruction, the African Group notes with deep appreciation the announcement made by the OPCW on August 27th, 2016, confirming the successful removal of precursor chemicals from Libya. This was part of an ongoing operation undertaken in close collaboration with the Libyan National Authority, to verifiably eliminate remaining chemical weapons stocks, in line with the obligation of Libya, pursuant to the Convention.

We express our relief at the timely removal of the precursor chemicals, particularly in light of the current situation in the country and the risk that such material could be used for terrorists' purposes or any other prohibited activities under the Convention.

We strongly commend the efforts of Libya and the OPCW in achieving this milestone and also express appreciation to all those countries that have provided political, financial, operational support and technical expertise.

Mr. Chairperson

The African Group has learnt of allegations made by a non-governmental organization of the use of chemical weapons in the Darfur region of Sudan.

The Group urges Member States not to rely on allegations. It should be recalled that the United Nations-African Union Hybrid Force in Darfur, UNAMID, deployed in the Darfur region since the year 2007, has submitted five (5) reports to the United Nations Security Council and none of these reports has included any reference to such unsubstantiated allegations.

Mr. Chairperson

Let us all recall that, the existence of weapons of mass destruction continues to pose a threat to international peace and security. Accordingly, the African Group wishes to reiterate its long-standing principled position toward the achievement of general and complete disarmament, under strict and effective international control, including the prohibition and elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, in line with the first paragraph of the preamble of the Convention.

In this regard, the African Group notes with concern the conclusions in the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigate Mechanism (JIM) reports on the use of chemical weapons in the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic.

The Group also deeply regrets the inability of the Eighty Third Session of the Executive Council to deal with this matter in a consensual manner, but had to vote on the Executive Council decision EC-83/DEC.5.

The African Group continues to underline that the use of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals, as a weapon, anywhere by anyone and under any circumstances is reprehensible and completely contrary to the provisions of the Convention and all norms of international law. We also affirm that those responsible for the use of chemical weapons must be held accountable.

We urge the continued cooperation of the Syrian Arab Republic regarding the implementation of the relevant Executive Council decisions towards the elimination of all of its Chemical Weapons and Chemical Weapons Production Facilities.

Mr. Chairperson

On International Cooperation, the African Group attaches great importance to the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of all provisions of Article XI and emphasize the need to speed up efforts in this regard.

We are convinced that the adoption of an action plan for the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of Article XI is paramount and cannot be excluded. We welcome the efforts made by the Technical Secretariat to enhance the implementation of Article XI and we believe that this requires continuous collaboration between the Technical Secretariat and the States Parties as demonstrated by the recently held Review and Evaluation Workshop on the Components of an Agreed Framework for the Full Implementation of Article XI in November 2016. We take note of the conclusions of the Workshop and we hope that State Parties and the Technical Secretariat can concretize the outcomes of the Workshop into actionable deeds.

On Education and Outreach, the African Group recognizes the importance of the programmes in achieving the main objectives of the Convention. We welcome the work done by the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach, including all regional meetings held to contribute in formulating recommendations on education and outreach.

Mr. Chairperson

The African Group welcomes the establishment of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Future Priorities, under the co-Chairmanship of H.E. Vusi Bruce Koloane of South Africa and H.E. Sabine Nölke of Canada, to discuss and formulate recommendations on the Future Priorities of the OPCW for consideration at the Fourth Review Conference. We underline the importance of this Working Group and

encourage its close cooperation with all Regional Groups, Facilitator and Coordinators of other working groups.

The African Group will constructively engage in the discussions, particularly through the proposed African Programme Review Based Mechanisms, with a strong belief that all pillars of the Convention would be treated in a balanced manner, including the ones related to international cooperation, assistance and protection issues, amongst others.

Furthermore, the African Group commends the work of the Chairperson of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism, H.E. Dr. Joe Tony Aidoo of Ghana and the Chairperson of the Sub-Working Group on Non-State Actors, H.E. Maria Teresa Infante of Chile. We further take note of the latest report presented by the Chairperson of the Sub-Working Group on Non-State Actors referring to what the OPCW can do within the framework of the Convention to strengthen its capabilities in the field of prevention and responses. Owing to the divergent views, the African Group wishes to encourage further consultations on this matter.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairperson, the African Group would like to commend ongoing efforts to completely eliminate Chemical Weapons and to prevent their re-emergence. The near-universal membership of the Convention is a key demonstration to the hard work of States Parties and, the Technical Secretariat in this respect.

I thank you for your attention.