



STATEMENT

BY

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REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE TWENTY-FIRST SESSION
OF THE CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES TO THE
CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION**

THE HAGUE, THE NETHERLANDS

30 NOVEMBER 2016

Mr. Chairperson

The Director-General of the OPCW

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is both an honour and a privilege for me to address this Conference and let me, at the outset, welcome and congratulate you Ambassador Dr. Christoph Israng, on your appointment as the Chairperson of the Twenty-First Session of the Conference of States Parties. I have no doubt that your vast diplomatic experience will enable you to effectively and successfully guide our deliberations during the course of this week. My delegation assures you of our full support and co-operation.

Let me also take this opportunity to thank the outgoing Chairperson, Ambassador Mr. Eduardo Ibarrola-Nicolin of Mexico for successfully steering the proceedings of the Twentieth Session in the past year.

Mr. Chairperson,

Zimbabwe associates itself fully with the Statement delivered by Her Excellency Mrs. Rose Makena Muchiri, the Permanent Representative of Kenya on behalf of the Africa Group as well as the statement delivered by Her Excellency Ms. Haifa Aissami Madah, the Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) States

Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China. Let me at this point, pay tribute to Ambassador Alizera Jahangiri of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his committed leadership as NAM and China coordinator in the last four years.

Mr. Chairperson,

My delegation welcomes Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü's report in which he provided a comprehensive overview of the activities of the Organisation. The report clearly demonstrates the Secretariat's strong desire and commitment to executing its functions in order to ensure the full and effective implementation of the Convention.

In particular, my delegation is deeply gratified by the Director-General's plan to extend, to a Fourth Phase, the Programme to Strengthen Co-operation with Africa for the period 2017 to 2019. Over the years, the Africa Programme has enabled African States Parties to enhance the capacities of their National Authorities and chemical industries to ensure sustainable and effective implementation of all provisions of the Convention. In view of the successes of the previous phases, I want to assure the Director-General of Zimbabwe's full support for the successor programme, which we hope and urge that it will receive more solid funding and comprise new priorities and implementation modalities that are in line with the purpose and objectives of the Convention.

Mr. Chairperson,

I was recently appointed as a Cabinet Minister of Welfare Services for War Veterans, War Collaborators, Ex-Political Detainees and Restricttees in Zimbabwe. Hundreds of these men and women are victims of chemical warfare attacks using napalm by the then illegal Rhodesian Security Forces and their allies. At the end of the war, nothing was done to heal their horrendous physical and psychological wounds. With the little resources that the new Zimbabwe had, the facility that had previously manufactured the napalm was converted into a fertiliser production company. However, the welfare of the hundreds of victims of chemical warfare was neglected. I am sure there are several examples of such victims especially in the Southern African region, which was the theatre of chemical warfare waged by both Rhodesia and the then apartheid state of South Africa. Efforts to address the treatment and welfare of these victims of chemical warfare are long overdue.

Mr. Chairperson,

There is an emerging threat of the use of chemicals in the destruction of wildlife and the environment by poachers in Zimbabwe. Although the poachers plying the illegal ivory trade use Cyanide to kill elephants, it is a dangerous use of chemistry for the wholesale destruction of wildlife and only a step away from the use of Cyanide by a criminal organisation against people. This is a grey

area for our organisation - given the legal definition of a chemical weapon, especially for napalm. Although this is a grey area for the CWC, is this a situation that the CWC can afford to ignore? There are recent examples of the use of chemical weapons made out of readily available chemicals that have been used on human beings. Chlorine is a good example. This must make us all take new notice of what a controlled substance or its precursor is before we have Cyanide weaponised in this time of asymmetrical warfare.

Mr Chairperson,

My delegation is prepared to engage the Secretariat to discuss, in the context of the Trust Fund for the International Support Network for Victims of Chemical Weapons, possible ways of assisting the victims of a forgotten chemical war that was waged by Rhodesia Security Forces and their allies, in order to alleviate the continued suffering of these war veterans. We also urge this organisation to tackle the growing problem of the use of Cyanide or any other such chemicals which are readily available before they find their way to a war against human beings in war zones.

Mr. Chairperson,

My delegation is pleased with the progress made towards achieving universality of the Convention and in particular the strong show by African countries. We commend the Secretariat for its efforts in this regard and hope that the remaining non-States Parties to the

Chemical Weapons Convention will join the global consensus against chemical weapons.

Mr. Chairperson, my delegation welcomes the establishment of the Open-Ended Working Group on Future Priorities whose purpose would be to formulate recommendations on the future priorities of the OPCW for consideration by the Fourth Review Conference. It is our fervent wish that the outcome of discussions will not only be balanced but will be a reflection of collaborative efforts and the positions of all regional groupings of the OPCW.

In closing, Mr. Chairperson, I wish to stress that my delegation stands ready to work with all delegations in a constructive manner with a view to ensure that the Twenty-First Session of the Conference is a success.

I request that this document be circulated as part of the official documents of this Conference.

I THANK YOU.