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UGANDA

**STATEMENT BY MR PIUS BIGIRIMANA
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SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND HEAD OF UGANDA NATIONAL AUTHORITY FOR
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION AT THE
TWENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,
Your Excellency the Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to take this opportunity on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Uganda, to congratulate you, on your election as Chairperson of the Twenty-First Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention. We are confident that you will steer the deliberations of the Twenty-First Session to a successful conclusion. The Ugandan delegation will offer you their full support throughout the session. I also take this opportunity to thank the outgoing Chairperson, Ambassador Eduardo Ibarrola-Nicolín of Mexico, for his commitment and hard work as Chairperson of the Twentieth Session of the Conference of the States Parties.

My delegation would also like to congratulate the other newly elected officials to this session of the Conference. My delegation fully associates itself with the statement by the African Group and with the statement on behalf of the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China. I have taken note of the opening statement by Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü, Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, on its activities and wish to express our appreciation for the professional manner in which he continues to manage the affairs of the Organisation.

We welcome the progress achieved with regard to the implementation of the Convention worldwide. The Convention remains the only multilaterally negotiated, non-discriminatory and internationally verifiable instrument for the destruction of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons must therefore act without fear or favour in achieving the objectives. I urge those states in Africa and the world over that are yet to accede to the Convention to do so as a matter of urgency.

As you are aware, Uganda does not possess, produce or have stockpiles of chemical weapons. However the support from the Technical Secretariat in the implementation of the programme for Africa has continued to infuse the necessary skills and capacity-building within the



implementation of the Convention, which will assist my country in its economic development. With regard to the East African Community (EAC) Chemical Emergency Response, Planning and Management Mechanism, the Uganda delegation and the EAC region are pleased with the development of this important mechanism in the region. We commend the OPCW, especially the Assistance and Protection Branch, Czechia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America among other partners, for their continued cooperation and support in making this essential mechanism a reality for us.

In this regard, Uganda hosted members from States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention in the East African region for an operational training in emergency response to a chemical incident or attack. The training took place this month in Jinja, Uganda from 14 – 18 November 2016. The objectives of the training were to equip the participants with knowledge and skills in handling emergencies involving toxic chemicals. The training was facilitated by experts from Czechia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. A total of 45 participants from Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and Uganda were trained. Representatives of the East African Community (EAC), and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) attended as observers.

I take this opportunity to thank the Governments of Czechia and the United Kingdom for the provision of financial and technical support to the EAC region under the programme for Assistance and Protection. The equipment for the training was donated by Czechia and remained at the Uganda Rapid Deployment Capability Centre (URDCC) after the training. The equipment shall be effectively used for further capacity-building in the region.

In this regard, the Republic of Uganda proposes that the OPCW includes this activity in their calendar as an annual event so that the equipment donated is used appropriately to develop the capacity in the region and in Africa at large. The Government of Uganda pledges to support this activity.

My delegation, would like to see the full implementation of Article XI through substantial assistance to non-possessor States in order to enable them to develop chemical capacity and industry.

This will facilitate the developing countries to view the Convention as a relevant tool and as a catalyst for economic development through the unlimited use of chemicals for peaceful purposes not prohibited by the Convention. In this respect, the Uganda delegation welcomes the development of concrete measures to ensure the promotion of international cooperation in the field of chemical activities through the exchange of scientific and technical information.

I would like to recognise the efforts of the Technical Secretariat staff of the OPCW who have in the recent past organised training courses, sensitisation workshops where Ugandan nationals have participated. I take this opportunity to recognise the new initiative code named Influential Visitors Programme for which Uganda was the first beneficiary last year. It was after this programme that our members of Parliament were able to understand the objectives of the Chemical Weapons Convention and later discussed and approved the Toxic Chemicals Prohibition and Control Act, 2016. I encourage States Parties who have not yet put in place legislative measures to domesticate the Convention to explore avenues in the Influential Visitors Programme.

We urge the Technical Secretariat to continue with its activities and programmes aimed at advancing Article VII implementation.

In this regard we support tailor-made approaches taking into account the different States Parties' circumstances in order to achieve the objectives of the Convention.

I appreciate the Director-General's efforts to strengthen cooperation with African States Parties through the Africa Programme. These efforts provide strategic direction to the engagement with the Technical Secretariat and the African States Parties. My country, which is a beneficiary of the programme, looks forward to continued cooperation with the Technical Secretariat in order to strengthen the programme through new initiatives and actions. This will strategically contribute directly to capacity-building and the transfer of the requisite skills to my country as well as assist in the timely implementation of the Convention.

Finally, Mr Chairperson, I thank you, and would like to request that this statement be circulated and published as an official document of the Twenty-First Session of the Conference of the States Parties.

I thank you for your attention.

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