

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF AFRICAN STATES PARTIES TO THE  
CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION, DELIVERED BY THE ACTING  
COORDINATOR H.E. MR. VUSI BRUCE KOLOANE, AMBASSADOR PERMANENT  
REPRESENTATIVE OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE ORGANISATION FOR THE  
PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS (OPCW)**

**22<sup>ND</sup> SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES TO THE CHEMICAL  
WEAPON CONVENTION  
(THE HAGUE, 27 NOVEMBER-1 DECEMBER 2017)**

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**Mr. Chairperson, Excellencies, distinguished delegates;**

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of African States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).
2. At the outset, the African Group would like to take this opportunity to recognize the outstanding efforts and the important work done by H.E Ambassador Dr. Christoph Israng of Germany, as Chairperson of the 21<sup>st</sup> Session of the Conference of the States Parties. The African Group wishes to extend its gratitude to him for expertly leading our activities during this special phase of our Organisation.
3. I would also like to welcome and congratulate you Your Excellency Ambassador Abdelouahab Bellouki, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Morocco, as the Chairperson of the Conference and express confidence in your able leadership to steer this Conference to successful conclusion.
4. In addition, the African Group associates itself with the Statement of the Group of Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and China, which was delivered by the Group's Coordinator, H.E. Ambassador Haifa Aissami Madah, the Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the OPCW.

**Mr. Chairperson;**

5. The African Group would like to express its gratitude to the Director-General, H.E. Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü, for his informative and comprehensive report delivered in this Session. We warmly salute his excellent endeavours during his successful mandate in promoting the role of the Organisation.
6. The African Group is also pleased by the adoption of the consensual decision regarding the appointment of H.E. Ambassador Fernando Arias of Spain as

the incoming Director-General of the Technical Secretariat of OPCW. We would like to extend our warm felicitations and good wishes to Ambassador Arias on this unanimous endorsement. We look forward to working closely with him to achieve a world free of chemical weapons.

7. By celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our Organisation, the Continent's commitment to a world free of Chemical Weapons remains more solid and strong, as reflected by the near-universal intake and absorption of the Chemical Weapons Convention. This is why the African Group welcomes and strongly supports the decision made by the Conference of State Parties, **C-21/5 of 2 December 2016**, on the continuation of the fourth phase of the Africa Programme which began on 1 January 2017 for another three-year period.
8. In this context, we recall that the Programme should be anchored by the regular budget so as to ensure its predictability and sustainability. We also take this opportunity to express our gratitude to all the voluntary contributors, for making this Programme efficient and sustainable.
9. In addition, the African Group welcomes the follow-up mechanism of the Africa Programme in line with the Director-General Note of the 27<sup>th</sup> February 2017 to achieve the concrete purposes indicated. In this regard, we appreciate the pragmatic and inclusive approach adopted by the Director-General to enhance the African Programme, as mentioned in the Note of 12 September 2017 [**EC86/DG.18**].
10. The African Group, therefore, encourages that, under the Africa Programme, the Technical Secretariat continues to deliver on its commitments, so as to enhance national capacities for the implementation of the Convention, develop tailor-made Assistance and Protection activities, support the establishment of designated laboratories, and the peaceful use of chemistry.
11. Equally important, the African Group emphasises continued support of the OPCW in the area of sensitisation, especially for decision makers at the regional Organisation, the African Union, and its Regional Economic Communities through the various Technical Secretariat's special programmes.
12. The African Group notes and welcomes the proposal for updating the OPCW Laboratory and is confident that this move will assist with capacity building, particularly for regions without any designated laboratories. We look forward to receiving an update from the Technical Secretariat on this project.

**Mr. Chairperson;**

13. On the destruction of the rest of chemical weapons stockpiles, the African Group reiterates its long-standing principled position towards the achievement of complete disarmament in line with the Convention and the PMO's decision, under strict and effective international control.
14. In this regard, the African Group commends the achievements made in relation to the process of destruction of the remaining Category II chemical weapons in Libya, in line with its obligations pursuant to the Convention.
15. The African Group reiterates its appreciation to the Russian Federation for the full destruction of its Chemical Weapons Stockpile, under OPCW Verification. In this regard, we encourage the complete destruction of all remaining chemical weapons stockpiles, as soon as possible.

**Mr. Chairperson;**

16. The African Group welcomes the complete destruction of all chemical weapons declared by the Syrian Arab Republic. It also notes the progress concerning the destruction of all facilities in this State Party.
17. We highlight the importance of the continuous dialogue between the Syrian Arab Republic and the Technical Secretariat on all pending issues, and look forward to positive outcomes of this cooperation. Furthermore, we encourage both parties to continue the implementation of the relevant Executive Council decisions.
18. The African Group values the merits of the OPCW being a technical Organisation, and encourages all Member States and stakeholders to work closely together to preserving this nature.

**Mr. Chairperson;**

19. On Education and Outreach, the African Group recognizes the importance of the programmes in achieving the main objectives of the Convention. The Group welcomes 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. The African Group views this programme as an essential tool for enhancing and developing a culture of implementation of the Convention, through cooperation with the African Union and the African Regional Economic Communities.

**Mr. Chairperson;**

20. We believe that after 20 years of the entry into force of the Convention, it is necessary that our concerns, especially regarding the equal implementation of the four pillars of the Convention, that is Articles VI, VII, X and XI, should now be carried out in an efficient manner. This should also be adequately reflected in future budgetary decisions.
21. On the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism, the Group commends the work being achieved by the Chairperson, H.E. Ambassador Momar Diop of Senegal and the Chairperson of the Sub-Working Group on Non-State Actors, H.E. Ambassador Maria Teresa Infante of Chile. In this context, we appreciate the contribution of the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), and we express our gratitude to its Director, Mr Larry Gbevlo-Lartey, for his comprehensive presentation on this matter. This kind of contribution from the African Union could help enrich the Group's interactions with the OPCW, taking into account the realities of the various regions.
22. In this regard, we take this opportunity to thank the Director-General and the OPCW - The Hague Award Committee for jointly awarding the 2017 OPCW – The Hague Award to the ACSRT, based in Algiers, as well as the International Master Courses in Protection against Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear explosive (CBRNe) at the University of Rome.
23. The African Group commends the work of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Future Priorities, under the co-Chairmanship of H.E. Ambassador Vusi Bruce Koloane of South Africa and H.E. Ambassador Sabine Nölke of Canada, to discuss and formulate recommendations on the Future Priorities of the OPCW for consideration at the Fourth Review Conference. We stress the importance of this Working Group and encourage it to continue its work in the spirit of consultations, consensus and ownership, taking into account the specific needs and concerns of the African Continent.
24. The African Group is aware that the re-emergence of chemical weapons and the threat of chemical terrorism are some of the main challenges for the Organisation. We are of the view that the future priorities of the OPCW should be focused on cooperation and assistance, capacity building, and promotion of the role of eco-chemistry for sustainable development.
25. The fourth Review Conference, in November 2018, is also an appropriate opportunity to discuss important issues related to the implementation of the

Convention and working methods of the Organisation, such as the establishment of clear rules of procedure for the future, similar to the practices of other International Organizations. This should also take into account fair regional representation and gender mainstreaming.

I thank you for your attention.