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INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION
AT THE TWENTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE
CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to begin by thanking you for the honour you have bestowed on the Kingdom of Morocco by having it chair the Twenty-Second Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention. I should also like to thank the African Group on behalf of my delegation for the trust it has placed in my country, through Ambassador Bellouki, by granting him the privilege of chairing the work of this session.

On behalf of the Kingdom of Morocco, I should also like to pay a warm tribute to the outgoing Chairperson of the Conference, Ambassador Christoph Israng of Germany, for his commendable work as Chairperson of the Twenty-First Session of the Conference of the States Parties.

Furthermore, I fully support the statements made by Ambassador Vusi Bruce Koloane of South Africa, the interim Coordinator of the African Group, and Ambassador Haifa Aissami Madah of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and China.

It is also a great pleasure for me to express my profound gratitude to the Director-General of our Organisation, Ahmet Üzümcü, for his very relevant statement and the excellent work he has undertaken as the leader of this institution, and for his unfailing commitment to attaining its noble goals and tackling the challenges of chemical disarmament. These remarkable achievements resulted in the OPCW being awarded, quite rightly and much to our delight, the Nobel Peace Prize.

I am pleased to note that under the able leadership of the Director-General, we are moving toward the total and complete destruction of worldwide declared chemical weapons stockpiles.



My delegation also welcomes the consensus surrounding the process to appoint Ambassador Fernando Arias of Spain as the next Director-General of the OPCW. My country once again wishes to express its willingness to work with the new Director-General and to assure him of its full support in the discharge of his new duties.

My country once more wishes to reiterate its strong condemnation of the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere. This constitutes a violation of the Convention, the decisions of the Executive Council (hereinafter “the Council”), and the United Nations Security Council, as well as the relevant rules of international law.

Morocco warmly welcomes the launch of the fourth phase of the OPCW Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa, which remains a critical element for assisting African States in achieving their legitimate aspirations for inclusive and sustainable development.

In this connection, I should like to praise the dynamism of the OPCW Technical Secretariat (hereinafter “the Secretariat”), and particularly the Assistance and Protection Branch, which is working relentlessly to promote and strengthen national and regional capacities. There is no question that its work has helped African States Parties to put in place suitable measures for protection against chemical attacks and threats.

Morocco will have the honour of hosting the regional meeting of National Authorities of African States Parties in 2018, and is convinced that this gathering will allow us to put extra emphasis on the relevant priorities for Africa.

Through its cooperation and assistance programmes, the OPCW is in a position to further motivate beneficiary African States Parties to redouble their efforts to discharge their obligations in the best possible way.

Regarding the progress of operations to destroy declared chemical weapons, my country welcomes the completion of the entire process for the destruction of chemical weapons in Libya in accordance with its obligations under the Convention. We also welcome the completion of the destruction of the entire stockpile of declared chemical weapons by the Russian Federation. We hope that the objective of total destruction will be achieved as quickly as possible.

While we have taken note of the results of the destruction of declared chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic, my country encourages continued dialogue between that State Party and the Secretariat to ensure optimal implementation of the Convention and the relevant decisions in this area.

My delegation has noted with great concern the conclusions in the last report of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), following the alarming reports of the Fact-Finding Mission. It strongly condemns the proven use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic and underscores that it is absolutely necessary for those responsible to be held to account.

My delegation regrets that the members of the Council of this Organisation are still not in a position to speak with one voice on this humanitarian tragedy. Member States must consolidate the unity of the Council and strengthen the effectiveness and credibility of our Organisation.

The serious threats and the now real risk that non-State actors and terrorist groups could get their hands on chemical weapons, as evidenced by the reports of the JIM, pose a real danger not only for the countries and regions concerned, but also for international peace and security.

Education and outreach also play a crucial role in prevention, an area in which the Organisation will need to step up its efforts in the years to come.

The Kingdom of Morocco remains steadfast in its efforts to implement its obligations under the Convention. Legislative and administrative measures have been taken in accordance with the provisions set out in Article VII and the various decisions adopted by the Conference of the States Parties.

The various activities organised by the Secretariat, alone or in conjunction with certain States Parties to the Convention, and in which Morocco has actively participated, have allowed my country to strengthen its capacities, share its experience, and benefit from established best practices.

In this connection, the Kingdom of Morocco organised, in cooperation with the Secretariat, a basic course for Arabic-speaking States Parties on assistance and protection against chemical weapons, which was held in Casablanca from 14 to 18 May 2017.

Morocco, which strongly believes in the merit of these activities, is also prepared to host the eighteenth annual assistance and protection coordination workshop, to be held in Marrakech in 2018.

After completion of the destruction of declared chemical weapons, the peaceful use of chemistry should be placed high on the list of the priorities of our Organisation. In this context, increased voluntarist international cooperation under Article X of the Convention should help to marshal our efforts. Given the role that chemistry—and I would even say green chemistry—plays in industrial progress and sustainable development, Article XI concerning economic and technological development is also critically important.

Furthermore, the Kingdom of Morocco reiterates the need to work tirelessly to achieve the universality of the Convention.

To conclude, my delegation believes that the twentieth anniversary of our Organisation is the ideal occasion to renew our steadfast commitment to the principles and objectives of the Convention and to tailor our action to address the challenges relating to the proliferation and re-emergence of chemical weapons.

Mr Chairperson, I would ask that this statement be considered as an official document of this session of the Conference.

Thank you for your attention.

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