

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF AFRICAN STATES PARTIES
TO
THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION DELIVERED BY THE
COORDINATOR OF THE GROUP H. E. MR. VUSIMUZI MADONSELA,
AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC
OF SOUTH AFRICA
TO THE ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL
WEAPONS (OPCW) AT
THIRTIETH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES
(THE HAGUE, 24-28 NOVEMBER 2025)**

**Chairperson,
Director-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates**

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of African States Parties ("The Africa Group/ the Group") to the Chemical Weapons Convention ("The Convention"). The Group welcomes H.E. Mr Agustín Vásquez Gómez, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of El Salvador to the OPCW. The Group assures him of our support in steering the deliberations of this session to a successful conclusion. The group thanks H.E Mr. Almir Šahović Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the OPCW for *his successful steering of CSP 29*.
2. The Group extends its appreciation to the Director-General of the OPCW, H.E. Mr. Fernando Arias, for his comprehensive statement and reiterates its confidence in his efforts to further strengthen the work of the Organisation. In addition, the Group commends the Deputy Director-General, Ambassador Odette Melono and the staff of the Technical Secretariat for their invaluable role in facilitating the implementation of the Convention.
3. The Group associates itself with the statement of the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Convention and China, delivered by H.E. Ms. Mirjam Blaak Sow, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Uganda to the OPCW.

Chairperson,

4. The year 2025 marks the end of the 6th phase of the Africa Programme. The Group looks forward to the launch of the 7th phase in January 2026, which will build on previously achieved milestones, taking into account the seven objectives identified under the 7th phase, being to: Advance national implementation of the Convention; Strengthen cross-border chemical transfer controls; enhance protection and response to chemical incidents; advance chemical safety and security culture; strengthen chemical laboratories capacities; promote knowledge of peaceful chemistry; foster programme visibility, stakeholder engagement and partnerships.
5. The Group welcomes the 23rd Regional meeting of National Authorities of African States Parties held on the 17-19 of June 2025, in Tunis, co-organised by the Secretariat and the Government of Tunisia. The Group acknowledges positive outcomes of the meeting in terms of improving the national implementation of the Convention in Africa and advancing the planning for the 7th phase of the Africa Programme. The Group recognises the Secretariat's unwavering commitment to supporting African Member States on their path to the full implementation of the Convention. In addition, promoting stakeholders' engagement will further induce impact of the 7th phase.
6. The Group welcomes the Integrated Advanced Course and Exercise on Assistance and Protection against Chemical Weapons, hosted in Tunis, Tunisia, from 25th September to 2nd October 2025, for French-speaking African States Parties. This event, organized within the framework of the OPCW's Africa Programme, aims to significantly strengthen national and regional capacities for preparedness and response to chemical emergencies. By enhancing technical expertise and fostering regional cooperation, the course contributes meaningfully to the implementation of Article X of the Chemical Weapons Convention and to the promotion of collective security and resilience across the African continent.

Chairperson,

7. The Group reaffirms its position against the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, and under any circumstances and reiterates its commitment to the full implementation of the CWC.

8. The Group takes note of the recent positive developments regarding the Syrian chemical weapons dossier. It further welcomes the adoption of the decision submitted to the 110th session of the Executive Council by the State of Qatar which currently represents the interest of Syria in the OPCW. This marks a major step towards resolving the Syrian chemical weapons dossier made possible through support from the State of Qatar. This decision provides cooperation framework for both Syria and the OPCW to address any remaining chemical weapons in the country in a manner consistent with current realities and available capacities, helping to overcome obstacles and ultimately rid Syria and the world of these weapons.
9. The Group commends the ongoing cooperation between China and Japan under the supervision of the Technical Secretariat with the aim of achieving full destruction of the Abandoned Chemical Weapons in China. The Group looks forward to the implementation of the Action Plan agreed upon at the 101st session of the Executive Council to ensure that the deadline of 2027 is complied with.
10. The Group recalls the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation between the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW and the African Union Commission on strengthening cooperation geared towards implementation of the Convention. In this respect, the Group notes the consultations convened on 9 December 2024, 19 May 2025 and 31 July 2025 between representatives of the International Cooperation and Assistance (ICA) Division and the African Union Commission's Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department (AUPAPS) and welcomes the ICA's renewed efforts focused on further promoting the CWC implementation in Africa and advancing the objectives of the OPCW Africa Programme.
11. The Group notes the continued effort of the Technical Secretariat in initiating tailor-made programmes- focusing on the needs and aspirations of States Parties, including enhancing capacities of chemical laboratories and centres of excellence in Africa. The Group recognises the support of the Technical Secretariat and other collaborating partners to this endeavour which will contribute to the expansion of the OPCW-designated laboratories network to all regions. This will strengthen States Parties' capabilities to implement the CWC in responding to any use or threat of use of Chemical Weapons.

12. The Group commends the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism (OEWG-T) chaired by H.E. Ambassador Vusimuzi Philemon Madonsela of the Republic of South Africa. As we take stock of 2025, the Group applauds its work as a primary forum for States Parties to contribute to global anti-terrorism efforts and strengthening chemical security. The Group reiterates that constant coordination between international organisations and relevant stakeholders is crucial in building awareness on chemical security and advancing global efforts, within the scope of the Convention, to prevent chemical terrorism as well as the threat of re-emergence of chemical weapons.
13. The threats of the re-emergence of chemical weapons and chemical terrorism, compounded by the risks posed by rapid advances in science and technology, particularly the potential use of UAVs, remain the main challenges for the Organisation. These challenges underscore the importance for the OPCW continuing to monitor and assess the impact of this dual-use technology on the implementation of the CWC. Cognisant of these glaring challenges, the Group advocates for continued efforts by the organization to reinforce the capacity of States Parties to prevent and respond to terrorist chemical incidents, encouraging engagement with diverse stakeholders, including industry representatives, research centers, and United Nations specialised agencies, exchanging experiences and ensuring more efficient action against chemical terrorism.
14. The Group highly values that Emerging Technologies, especially Artificial Intelligence (AI) have become an integral part of the OPCW's agenda and, in this context, notes with appreciation the convening of the "First Global Conference on the Role of AI in advancing the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention", co-hosted by the Kingdom of Morocco and the Technical Secretariat in October 2024 in Rabat. This pioneering Conference explored both opportunities and risks that AI pose to the Convention and highlighted the need to harness its potential to strengthen States Parties' capabilities and to responsibly leverage AI in advancing the objectives of the Convention. The Group commends the efforts and initiatives of the Technical Secretariat to address this matter including the establishment of the Temporary Working Group of AI.

Chairperson,

15. The Group welcomes efforts by the Director-General at achieving gender balance and equitable geographical representation in the Staff establishment in the Technical Secretariat at the top management levels of the Organisation. However, constructive and corrective measures should be taken to address the underrepresentation of the Africa region in the Technical Secretariat at all levels including top-level management of the Organisation. To this end, the Group calls for greater transparency in the processes of recruitment and selection of personnel to the Secretariat and looks forward to the Secretariat's report on the status of and timelines for the implementation of the Action Plan on Geographical Representation as decided by CSP-28.
16. The Group will continue to follow the effective implementation of the decision taken at the CSP 28 on Tenure Policy and urges the Technical Secretariat to report thereon as directed by the Conference. The Group also wishes to encourage the implementation of knowledge management processes in the organisation. This would afford the Organisation the broad benefits of a diverse and skilled workforce, consistent with Article VIII, Paragraph 44 of the Convention.
17. The Group commends the progress made in addressing the matter of transfer of funds out of the International Cooperation and Assistance (ICA) Programmes. The Group notes with satisfaction the inclusion of the Group's proposal in the decision on Biennial Programme and Budget of the OPCW (2026-2027) to be adopted by CSP-30. The Group reiterates its call on the Technical Secretariat and States Parties to work collectively with a view to achieving the full and effective implementation of the ICA programmes. In this regard, the Group strongly urges that the relevant budgetary requirements and programmes of the Organisation are effectively and promptly executed. This will avert the need for transfers between major programmes, including consideration of the retention of unspent funds for ICA in a special fund.
18. The Group, while restating its principled position on the balanced implementation of all Articles of the Convention, remains convinced that the measures put in place for the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of Article XI are of paramount importance for the reinforcement of capacity building of all States Parties. As recommended by the EC decision C-16/DEC.10 dated 1st December 2011, the Group welcomes the efforts made by the Technical Secretariat, notably, on the new initiatives on the three focus areas of integrated chemicals management, enhancement of

laboratory capabilities, and chemical knowledge promotion and exchange. The Group encourages the adoption of concrete measures that enable the implementation of the output of the Drafting Committee on Article XI.

Mr. Chairperson,

19. The Group underscores the merits of consensus building as a means to adopting core decisions that are relevant to the objectives of the Convention. Consensus enables States Parties to avoid controversies that beset decision-making processes in ensuring the effective implementation of the mandate of the OPCW. The Group encourages all States Parties to preserve the technical nature of the Organisation and work in close collaboration with stakeholders towards the full implementation of the Convention. The Group believes that this will contribute to international peace and security.
20. In this regard the Group congratulates H. E. Ambassador Sabrina Dallafior MATTER of Switzerland for being consensually recommended by the 110th Session of the Executive Council as the incoming Director General of the OPCW and assures her of the Group's support and cooperation. The Group appreciates the role of the Chair of the Executive Council for leading the nomination process in an open manner. The Group also pays tribute to all the candidates who were nominated for this position for their commitment and sense of responsibility which contributed to the successful conclusion of the nomination process.
21. The Group notes the Draft report of the chairperson on the activities of the OEWG on the Current Implementation of the Rules Governing the Election of Members of the Executive Council. Since its inception, the OEWG held only six meetings, during which the Group noted the important and active participation by many States Parties and the expression of different views and proposals with a majority of States Parties expressing their wish to reach a conclusion by consensus. Therefore, the Group calls for the extension of the mandate of the OEWG in 2026. The Group expresses its keenness to continue working with other States Parties towards finding common ground on the submissions to the OEWG, to guarantee States Parties' rights of choice during elections without restraints or undue procedural impositions or limitations.

21. The Group requests that this statement be published on the public website of the OPCW and the catalyst as an official document of this session.

I thank you for your kind attention.