

REPUBLIC OF BURUNDI



STATEMENT BY HER EXCELLENCY AMBASSADOR VESTINE NAHIMANA, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE ORGANIZATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS (OPCW) AT THE FOURTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS THE HAGUE, 26 – 28 JUNE 2018

Mr. Chairperson,
Mr. Director General,
Distinguished Delegates,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen;

1. I would like to begin by congratulating His Excellency Ambassador Abdelouahab Bellouki, President of this Conference of States Parties. While assuring you the full cooperation of my Delegation, I wish you every success in your role.
2. Following this, my Delegation would like to express its sincere gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Ahmet Üzümcü, Director General of the OPCW, as well as the Technical Secretariat, for the professional and high-quality work carried out during this period, to the teams in charge of inspections and assessment of declarations.
3. Allow me to also take this opportunity to congratulate the State of Palestine on its accession to the OPCW, marking this a significant step towards the universalisation of the Convention.
4. As a State Party to the OPCW that does not manufacture chemical weapons, Burundi remains concerned about the manufacture and continued use of weapons of all kinds, in particular chemical or toxic weapons/agents, used for purposes of chemical warfare anywhere in the world, and particularly by non-State actors.
5. Burundi strongly condemns the use or threat of use of chemical weapons by anyone, regardless of the circumstances. We are all aware of the multiple negative and despicable consequences resulting from the use of such of weapons, including the threats posed to our respective sovereignties through its link with terrorism.

Mr. Chairperson,

6. The OPCW has proven itself as one of the most effective and efficient disarmament mechanisms as well as a Technical Institution whose professionalism and objectivity is well established.
7. It is of vital importance that the spirit of solidarity, which marked the implementation phase of the Convention and has made it possible to achieve tangible results and meet security challenges, be preserved on the basis of consensus, as required by paragraph 18 of Article VIII of the Convention. Any failure by a Member State or Group of States to strive for this consensus could lead to weakening the Organization.

8. Over the past years, my Delegation has been closely following the work, progress of events, and discussions at the bilateral level and within the Organization on the situations in Iraq, Malaysia, Syria, and recently in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. At this point, my Delegation would like to denounce the deep crisis which the Organization faces in its struggle against the proliferation and use of chemical weapons, so that the principles and values of the Convention are protected and respected.
9. **Since the preparation of this Special Session and until now, my Delegation has been concerned about the need to preserve the integrity of the OPCW through its mission and structure, which is mainly technical.**
10. My Delegation also questions any supposed legal grounds contained in the Convention which would support the creation of an attributive mechanism within the Organization, considering that Member States have the primary responsibility to ensure strict conformity and application of the provisions of the Convention, in particular, Article VII requiring Member States to establish the necessary coercive measures and laws to penalize any activity contrary to the Convention under their jurisdiction.
11. Furthermore, my Delegation wishes to recall, as is known by all members present at this Conference, that unlike States, international organizations such as the OPCW, do not have universal legal personality. This means that they have the right **to act only within the mandate clearly stipulated** in their founding documents.
12. At this point, it is important to recall that, according to the *travaux préparatoires* of the Convention, any provisions which might have been interpreted as conferring on the organs of the OPCW attributive powers were intentionally excluded from the draft text or reformulated accordingly. This would undoubtedly lead to the conclusion that the establishment of an attributive mechanism within the OPCW would require an amendment to the Convention as provided for in Article XV of the said Convention.
13. My Delegation raises its voice to echo the voices of the other Nations present here and to oppose any subsidiary body that would undermine the OPCW, whose mission is clearly defined by the Convention.
14. My Delegation bears witness to the unfortunate consequences of negative solidarity against certain States, and deplores the instrumentalisation of facts assembled with the aim of triggering unjust sanctions, which ultimately make life difficult for innocent civilian populations.
15. It is in this vein that my Delegation urges the OPCW to remain vigilant to safeguard the cohesion of the Member States in order to pursue its mission ethically and professionally as guided by its conventional instruments.
16. Mr. Chairperson, I kindly ask that you make this statement an official document of this session.

I thank you