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TUNISIA

**STATEMENT BY MR MOHAMED KARIM BEN BECHER
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OF THE REPUBLIC OF TUNISIA TO THE OPCW
AT THE THIRD REVIEW CONFERENCE**

Mr Chairman,
Mr Director-General,
Your Excellencies, distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me, on behalf of the Government of Tunisia and on my own behalf, to convey to you my pleasure to see you chairing the Third Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention, in recognition of your skills and expertise. We are certain that your qualities, both human and professional, are a guarantee of success for this meeting. In this context, I should like to assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation in the accomplishment of your mission to bring it to a successful conclusion.

I should like, in addition, to pay tribute to the Director-General, Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü, as well as the members of the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW, for their continued and proven efforts towards ensuring the smooth operation and standing of our Organisation.

I should also like to warmly congratulate Her Excellency Ambassador Nassima Baghli of Algeria on her work, her leadership and her exceptional efforts as Chair of the open-ended working group for preparation of this Conference, which led to the adoption of a document which serves as a sound basis for discussion. I shall also take this opportunity to congratulate all the parties that have contributed to the work of the working group on their constructive spirit of consensus.

Furthermore, I should like to congratulate His Excellency Ambassador Sa'ad Al Ali of Iraq on his election as Chairman of the Committee of the Whole and to wish him much success in his work.

Last year our Organisation celebrated the fifteenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention. This important event provided us with an opportunity to review the steps which have been taken to implement the pertinent provisions of the Convention, and to identify steps which are likely to promote its implementation thoroughly and to optimise its operation while ensuring an effective balance among the different activities.



This year the Third Review Conference offers us another opportunity to evaluate the achievements and progress recorded in the different fields of implementation of the Convention, but also to endeavour to continue to improve the operation of the Organisation, bearing in mind the international context, which is changing in more than one respect, with a view to promoting international peace and security.

My delegation, which aligns itself with the statements of the African Group and of the Non-Aligned Movement and China, would like to voice its opinion on certain matters it considers to be pertinent.

Tunisia takes the opportunity of this Conference to reiterate its steadfast commitment to the causes of disarmament in general and the elimination of chemical weapons, as well as their non-proliferation, and to the terms of the Chemical Weapons Convention, in particular, for a world free of weapons of mass destruction.

It is with good reason that, since the ratification of the Chemical Weapons Convention in 1997, my country has applied itself to honouring its commitments under the Convention, by establishing, in 1999, its National Authority and in 2007 adopting national legislation in accordance with Article VII of the Convention. This commitment to the Convention was reaffirmed after the Tunisian Revolution in 2011, which illustrated the aspiration of our people for a better life and enabled Tunisia to subscribe further to the international values and principles of freedom, democracy and peace.

Within the framework of the implementation of Article VII of the Convention, and based on its experience, Tunisia is committed to supporting the efforts of the Technical Secretariat and of States Parties that may be in a position to offer their support to States which have not yet adopted legislation to implement the Convention.

Tunisia would be highly appreciative if the Review Conference were to emphasise the importance of the implementation of Article X, relating to assistance and protection, bearing in mind the evolution of the current context of the Convention, by adopting measures which should strengthen the capacities of States Parties, especially developing ones, with a view to addressing the new priorities. In this context, Tunisia had the privilege in 2010 of organising, in conjunction with the OPCW, the third exercise in assistance, ASSISTEX 3. My country stresses its willingness to work further with the Organisation in order to capitalise as much as possible on the results achieved.

It is in this context that Tunisia expresses its hope to see the Review Conference bestow particular importance on the Africa Programme, initiated by the Director-General, and fully supports any action that would fall within the framework of the pursuit of the implementation of this programme, which represents a significant contribution to the development of the national capacities of the African States Parties. In this context, Tunisia hosted the Organisation's first and second analytical chemistry courses, dedicated to French-speaking African States Parties, at the Tunisian Institute for Research and Physico-Chemical Analysis in 2011 and 2013.

At the same time, Tunisia takes this opportunity to reiterate its call for reinforcement of the presence of African staff within the Technical Secretariat of the Organisation, in view of the high number of African States Parties to our Organisation at the moment, and of their conscientious commitment to the principles of the Convention.

With regard to the economic and technological development of States Parties in the field of chemical activities not prohibited by the Convention, Tunisia would welcome concrete, non-discriminatory and effective measures that the Review Conference would be able to take to implement the pertinent provisions of Article XI of the Convention, and which would enable all States Parties and their businesses to have access to the international market in chemical products, as well as knowledge and know-how. In this regard, Tunisia expresses its wish to see the Review Conference pay due attention to the decision adopted by the Sixteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties on the elements of an agreed framework for comprehensive implementation of Article XI.

Allow me to conclude by reaffirming to you and all the delegations present the absolute readiness of my delegation to work on the basis of a consensus so that our deliberations will be conclusive.

My best wishes for success in your work.

My delegation would like this statement to be distributed as an official document of the Third Review Conference.

Thank you for your kind attention.

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