

**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),**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND TENTH SESSION
OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

(THE HAGUE, 7 - 10 October 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 Thomas Schieb, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Federal Republic of Germany to the OPCW, as Chairperson of this One **Hundred and Tenth** Session of the Executive Council* and assure him of our support in steering the deliberations of this session to a successful conclusion.
2. We also extend our appreciation to the Director-General of the OPCW, H.E. Mr. Fernando Arias, for his comprehensive statement and reiterate our 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 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 plus China,

delivered by H.E. Ms. Mirjam Blaak Sow, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Uganda to the OPCW.

4. The Group commends the progress made since the launch of the Sixth Phase of the OPCW Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa (The Africa Programme) and acknowledges the achievements recorded under the implementation of the previous phases. The Group welcomes the launch by the Technical Secretariat in May 2025 of a wide and inclusive consultative process with the African States Parties to design the 7th phase of the Africa Programme which commences in 2026. The Group expresses its appreciation to the States Parties and other partners that continue to make voluntary contributions to the Africa Programme for their support and reiterates the importance of the programme being fully funded under the regular budget of the OPCW to guarantee its sustainability.
5. The Group welcomes the 23rd annual meeting of African National Authorities, co-organised and hosted by the Tunisian Government, in Tunis from 17 to 19 June 2025. The meeting provided an opportunity to review the status of the implementation of the Convention in Africa, and the OPCW's capacity building activities for African States Parties. The meeting also reviewed the progress achieved in the sixth phase of the Africa Programme, discussed and validated the objectives of the 7th phase of the programme.
6. 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.
7. The Group takes note of the recent positive developments regarding the Syrian chemical weapons dossier and welcomes the constructive cooperation and engagement demonstrated by the Syrian Arab Republic Government with the Technical Secretariat. These constructive developments will set the stage towards a definitive closure of the Syrian chemical weapons dossier and achieving the convention's core objectives.
8. 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 EC 101 to ensure that the deadline of 2027 is met.

9. We encourage the Technical Secretariat and the international community to continue with efforts towards achieving the full universality of the Convention. We call on States not yet party to the Convention to accede to it without delay and or precondition.
10. 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. While noting the establishment of the National Institute of Criminalistic and Criminology (NICC) of Algeria as an OPCW-designated laboratory in Africa, the Group eagerly looks forward to more designated laboratories in the continent. The Group congratulates the Algerian Institute (NICC) for being co-recipient of the prestigious OPCW- The Hague Award for 2024 as recognition of its efforts in contributing to achieving the CWC goals for a World free of chemical weapons.
11. The Group commends the work of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism (OEWG-T) chaired by H.E. Ambassador Vusimuzi Philemon Madonsela of the Republic of South Africa. We look forward to the implementation of the action plan and the progress on the planned CHEMEX AFRICA II as well as the CHEMEX GRULAC I.
12. Cognisant of the threats of re-emergence of the use of chemical weapons, and chemical terrorism as some of the main challenges for the Organisation, the Group advocates for continued focus on cooperation and assistance, capacity building and promotion of the peaceful use of chemistry. Therefore, we recommend robust engagement with chemical industry associations in support of the use of chemistry for peaceful purposes, safety and security, sustainable methods that use non-toxic chemicals for sustainable development.
13. The Group takes note of the Technical Secretariat's Note (S/2360/2025 dated 29 January 2025) on the OPCW first Global Conference on the Role of AI organised jointly by the Kingdom of Morocco and the Technical Secretariat in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco, from 22 to 24 October 2024. The outcome of this

pioneering conference constitutes a reference for a better understanding of the Role of AI in the implementation of the Convention to address the evolving risks and threats posed by AI enabled technologies in the fields of chemical security and chemical disarmament.

14. The Group believes that the time is ripe for the OPCW to consider a strategy on the use of Emerging Technologies especially Artificial Intelligence, in the work of the OPCW to deepen internal capabilities of the organisation, noting that the UN adopted the first non-binding global resolution in 2024 on artificial intelligence.

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 African Group in the Technical Secretariat at all levels including top-level management of the Organisation. To this end, the Group calls for the implementation of the action plan on geographic representation and for greater transparency in the processes of recruitment and selection of personnel to the Secretariat. In this regard, it is worth recalling that the African Group has never had one of its nationals appointed as Director General, and the that is currently underway for the election of a new DG offers a timely and important opportunity to redress this historical imbalance.
16. The Group welcomes the decision taken at the CSP 28 on Tenure Policy, with the condition that any extension of contracts should not take place if competent candidates from underrepresented regions are available or if the extensions do not exacerbate the existing levels of under-representation of competent candidates from underrepresented regions.
17. Furthermore, the Group wishes to encourage the implementation of knowledge management processes in the organisation. This would afford the Organization the broad benefits of a diverse and skilled workforce, consistent with Article VIII, Paragraph 44 of the Convention.

18. The Group commends the progress made in addressing the matter of transfer of funds out of the International Cooperation and Assistance (ICA) Programmes. We note with satisfaction the inclusion of the Group's proposal in the decision on Biennial Programme and Budget of the OPCW for the term (2026-2027), which, amongst others, notes with concern that in past years there have been several transfers of not fully utilised funds out of the ICA.
19. We reiterate our 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 avoid or help to reduce the need for transfers between major programmes, including consideration of the retention of unspent funds for ICA in a special fund.
20. 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 for States Parties. As recommended by the EC decision C-16/DEC.10 dated 1st December 2011, we welcome 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. We encourage the adoption of concrete measures that enable the implementation of the output of the Drafting Committee on Article XI.
21. 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.

22. The Group notes the discussions within the Open-Ended Working Group on the current implementation on the rules of procedure related to the election of the members of the Executive Council. The Group notes with satisfaction the high level of participation by States Parties in the process in anticipation of an acceptable outcome to the States Parties. The Group looks forward to the timely submission by the Open-Ended Working Group of its reports to the General Committee for final recommendation to the CSP-30.
23. 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 and thanks you for your kind attention.