



OPCW

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KENYA

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP OF STATES PARTIES
AT THE SIXTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,

1. The African Group of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention would like to welcome you back to the Chair of the Council. We look forward to working closely with you in ensuring that the Council gives substantive consideration to the issues before it and bring them to a successful conclusion.
2. The African Group of States Parties associates itself with the statement made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and China by the Permanent Representative of Cuba.
3. The Group has also taken note of the opening statement by the Director-General on the activities of the Organisation and the reports of the Council by the Vice-Chairpersons on the work that they have undertaken since the last meeting of the Executive Council.
4. We would also use this opportunity to reiterate the African Group's positions on issues relating to:
 - Universality of the Convention;
 - The continued implementation of the Programme for Africa by the Technical Secretariat;
 - The implementation of national obligations and national implementation measures in accordance with Article VII of the Convention;
 - The implementation of Article X and its provisions relating to assistance and protection against chemical weapons;
 - The development of agreed concrete measures and recommendations to ensure the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of Article XI;
 - The role that the OPCW can play in the fight against terrorism;
 - The need for equitable geographical and gender representation in the professional ranks of the Organisation, particularly in the senior and management cadres;
 - The application of a tenure policy that would allow the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat to execute the programmes and activities of the Organisation;
 - The consultations that are taking place on the future role of the Organisation; and
 - The improved and effective functioning of the Executive Council.



5. The African Group has particularly been pleased to see the progress that has been achieved by this Executive Council in addressing the issues that were on its agenda. The successes of the Council's last session and the outcome of the Thirty-First Meeting did not only provide the foundation for a successful Sixteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties but also formed the basis for further work on such issues as universality; implementation of Article X; assistance and protection against chemical weapons; the non-discriminatory and the full implementation of Article XI; etc. We would extend our compliments to the Bureau and the facilitators for their diligent work. We hope to continue to see sustained efforts in order to maintain the momentum that has been achieved.
6. There are, however, three important issues for which the Council has not yet found the appropriate solutions and which we need to complete before we are able to lay claim to have been a fully successful session of the Executive Council. It is our hope that the Council will, together with the most interested States Parties, be able to adopt the required decisions on the following issues during its Sixty-Seventh Session:
 - a) Abandoned chemical weapons;
 - b) Old chemical weapons; and
 - c) Converted facilities.

The African Group believes that the issues of "abandoned chemical weapons" and of "old chemical weapons" will need to be addressed in accordance with the Convention and we were satisfied at the announcements that were previously made that the Executive Council will be able to successfully adopt decisions on the destruction of these weapons in the run-up to 29 April 2012. We look forward to the delegations involved coming forward with draft decisions that would allow this session of the Executive Council—the last before the 29 April 2012 date—to address these issues in a satisfactory way.

7. The question of how to address the issue of the conversion of chemical weapons production facilities is one those matters that have been outstanding for a considerable period of time and the African Group believes that the matter is now in need of resolution. Of particular relevance in this regard is the Director-General's certification of the conversion of these facilities, which should be the guiding principle in any decision on this matter.
8. We welcome the consultations that have been undertaken on the recommendations of the panel of eminent experts established by the Director-General on the future priorities of the Organisation. We are hopeful that the outcome of the panel's work will positively contribute to the discussions among the States Parties on the future priorities of the Organisation and will ensure that the Organisation remains relevant to all States Parties. The African Group also believes that an adaptation of the Organisation, whether it is in terms of its priorities or in terms of its structure, should come about as a natural progression and should not be on the basis of wholesale change or of "change" for the sake of the "change".
9. In this context, the Group is particularly concerned about the report that has been issued by an external consultant on the structure of the Technical Secretariat and the

function of its posts. It is our view that there is a fundamental flaw in the premises upon which the external consultant bases his conclusions and I quote:

“While the existing structure was appropriate for an organisation with a primary immediate and relatively short-term goal (destruction of chemical weapons), revisions to the structure appear appropriate to better carry out its long-term responsibilities under the Convention.”

The fact of the matter is that the destruction of chemical weapons, which the external consultant dismisses as a “relatively short-term goal”, has not been completed and this will not be the case for at least another 10 years. All of the primary objectives of the Convention remain as relevant today as they were when the agreements were originally reached among the States Parties on how this Organisation should be structured. The African Group consequently wishes to place on record that it does not and will not support the proposals that are made by the external consultant.

10. The structure of the Organisation must continue to match the primary objectives that are outlined by the Convention. Proposals for changes to the priorities in the Organisation that have not been agreed to cannot be achieved through proposals for organisational or structural changes. We believe that the current structure of the Organisation continues to meet the objectives of the Convention and of the States Parties. That is a structure which comprises:
 - a) Verification;
 - b) Inspectorate;
 - c) External Relations;
 - d) International Cooperation and Assistance; and
 - e) Administration.
11. There may be good reasons for some adjustments, without the wholesale change that has been proposed by the external consultant. For example, certain of the issues that have been dealt with by the “Special Projects” unit and which have now become integrated into the work of the Organisation, would be more appropriately dealt with by the regular branches of the Organisation. “Special Projects” are, by their very nature, defined as having a start and an end. Once such projects become “long-term” business, they should be a part of the regular work of the Organisation. The method by which the budget is developed should also be dealt with in order to be more reflective of the actual functions and structures that are being addressed by the budget. The distinction between Parts I and II of the budget should be a distinction between “operational implementation” and “administrative and other support functions”. Currently there is confusion between Part I and Part II of the budget when it comes to a differentiation between these two functions. Part II of the budget should only deal with issues related to administration and other support functions, and should not include substantive functions that relate to the operational implementation of key provisions of the Convention.
12. As such, all elements related to the following substantive provisions of the Convention should be consolidated in Part I. These are those elements dealing with:

- a) Inspection and verification of chemical weapons destruction (i.e. Articles III, IV and V);
- b) Inspection and verification of chemical industries (i.e. Article VI); and
- c) International cooperation and assistance, which operationally assists States Parties to effectively implement the Convention (i.e. Articles VII, X and XI).

Mr Chairperson,

I thank you, and we would like to request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Sixty-Seventh Session of the Executive Council.

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