

**STATEMENT BY THE GROUP OF AFRICAN STATES PARTIES TO THE
CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION DELIVERED BY KENYA'S PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE, H.E. AMBASSADOR ROSE MAKENA MUCHIRI,
TO THE EIGHTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (EC-83) OF THE OPCW**

THE HAGUE, THE NETHERLANDS, OCTOBER 11TH, 2016

Madam Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of African States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

To begin with, I would like to congratulate you, Ambassador Odette Melono of Cameroon, as the Chairperson of the Executive Council and wish to state that the African Group remains confident of your capabilities and competences to steer the deliberations of the Eighty-Third (83rd) Session of this Executive Council (EC) to a successful conclusion.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate H.E. Ambassador Haifa Aissami Madah of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, for taking over as the coordinator of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and China in the OPCW and also for excellently delivering the statement on behalf of NAM + China. The African Group fully associates with this Statement.

I would also like to thank our previous coordinator, H.E. Ambassador Alireza Jahangiri of the Islamic Republic of Iran, for his devotion and tireless efforts of coordinating the NAM + China in last four years.

Madam Chairperson

The African Group also wishes to express its gratitude to the Director-General, H. E. Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü, for his informative and comprehensive report delivered in this session. Similarly, the Group appreciates his continuous efforts and those of his team in the Technical Secretariat in promoting the role of the Organization in the International Disarmament regime, carrying out its functions under the Convention.

In particular, the African group wishes to note, with gratitude, the Director-General's Note, reference EC-83/DG.15 on the **Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa on the Chemical Weapons Convention**, also known as the Africa Programme. This has been the signature undertaking through which the OPCW has been engaging African State Parties in order to implement the Convention's objectives in the African Continent.

It should be noted that since the commencement of the Africa Programme, the Director-General has reported to the relevant policy-making organs (PMOs) of the

OPCW of the new initiatives, activities, events, and progress made by the Secretariat in the delivery of the Programme and the positive impact it continues to have to the various African Member States of the CWC. The programme is now in its Third Phase of a three-year period, which comes to an end in December of 2016.

The African Group notes that the Technical Secretariat intends to continue in the next cycle with a Fourth Phase of the Programme for another three-year period, from 2017 to 2019. The Group is, therefore, pleased and very desirous to see this Programme continue in an appropriate, efficient, equitable and sustainable manner. The envisioned results will and should continue to be;

- i. Increased and improved awareness about the significance and importance of the Chemical Weapons Convention, including rights, obligations, and benefits,
- ii. Augmented capacity of African States Parties to fully implement the provisions of the Convention,
- iii. Nurturing and fostering of regional cooperation and networking, particularly through the existing sub-regions of the Continent,
- iv. Facilitation of the delivery of equipment,
- v. Sustained collaboration between the African Union (AU) and the OPCW – to the extent possible – as well as continued enlightenment of what the future priorities and goals of the OPCW are in the coming years.

Madam Chairperson

On the budget for the Africa Programme, the Group would like to express sincere gratitude for the support extended to the Africa Programme from the contributing countries, for their voluntary contributions and other in-kind provisions. This not only dovetails well with the spirit of the Convention, but it also leads to the overall goal of a world free of Chemical Weapons.

While the Group remains profoundly appreciative of voluntary contributions, we would like to urge Member States to consider embedding the Africa Programme on the regular budgetary allocations and less reliant of voluntary funding. This will not only make the Programme predictable, self-directed and self-sufficient, but it will also ensure that the continent continues to remain one of the priority regions for OPCW Capacity-Building Programmes.

Madam Chairperson

The African Group also notes with deep appreciation the announcement made by the OPCW on August 27th, 2016, confirming the successful removal of precursor chemicals from Libya. This was part of an ongoing operation undertaken in close collaboration with the Libyan National Authority, to verifiably eliminate remaining chemical weapons stocks, in line with the obligation of Libya pursuant to the Convention.

We express our relief at the timely removal of the precursor chemicals, particularly in light of the current situation in the country and the risk that such material could be used for terrorist purposes or any other prohibited activities under the Convention.

We strongly commend the efforts of Libya and the OPCW in achieving this milestone and also express appreciation to the members of the international community that have provided technical expertise, operational support and financial resources in this regard.

Madam Chairperson

The African Group has learnt of allegations made by some Non-Governmental Organisations on the purported use of chemical weapons in the Darfur region. The Group urges Member States not to rely on allegations, but to stick to accuracy and truthfulness and we urge them against relying on such allegations.

It should be recalled that the United Nations-African Union Hybrid Force in Darfur, (UNAMID), deployed in the Darfur region since the year 2007, has submitted around five (5) reports to the United Nations Security Council and none of these reports has included any reference to such unsubstantiated allegations.

Madam Chairperson

The existence of weapons of mass destruction continues to pose a threat to international peace and security. Accordingly, the African Group wishes to reiterate its long-standing principled position toward the achievement of general and complete disarmament, under strict and effective international control, including the prohibition and elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, in line with the first paragraph of the preamble of the Convention.

The African Group continues to underline that the use of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals, as a weapon, anywhere by anyone and under any circumstances is reprehensible and completely contrary to the provisions of the Convention and all norms of international law. We also affirm that those responsible for the use of chemical weapons must be held accountable.

It is in this regard that the African Group welcomes the complete destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons and the significant progress made in the destruction of its chemical weapons production facilities and further welcomes the continued cooperation of the Syrian Arab Republic regarding the implementation of the relevant Executive Council decisions towards the elimination of its chemical weapons.

On the work done so far by the Fact-Finding Missions (FFMs), as well as its reports, we expect that the approach followed by the FFM teams will be uniform and consistent to continue studying all available information relating to the use of chemical weapons in Syrian Arab Republic.

Furthermore, we note with concern, the conclusions of the Third Report of the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) and we look forward to receiving its next report. We expect that the JIM will conduct its mission in a professional, objective and impartial manner and we look forward to close collaboration between the United Nations and the OPCW.

In addition, the African Group seeks a consensual approach regarding the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme and urges all Member States to work in this direction with the view to promote dialogue and consensus on this matter, as a way of achieving a balanced, impartial and transparent outcome.

Madam Chairperson

On the issue of Article XI, the African Group attaches great importance to the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of all provisions of this Article and emphasize the need to speed up efforts in this regard.

We are convinced that the adoption of an action plan for the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of Article XI is paramount and cannot be excluded. We welcome the efforts made by the Technical Secretariat to enhance the implementation of Article XI and we believe that this requires continuous collaboration between the Technical Secretariat and the States Parties. We believe that a systematic approach to the full and effective implementation of Article XI is a necessity.

The Group welcomes the concept of the participation of experts from National Authorities at the proposed workshop, to be held immediately before the 18th Annual Meeting of National Authorities in November 2016, in line with implementation of Article XI.

Further and in line with the earlier call that was read out in the NAM + China Statement, we wish to reiterate that the following elements should be taken into consideration by the Policy-Making Organs of the Organization;

- Allocation of adequate financial and human resources in annual Programme and Budget of the Organization for the implementation of Article XI related programmes and initiatives within the Technical Secretariat,
- Adoption of necessary actions or decisions to implement the relevant recommendations of the Third Review Conference regarding Article XI,
- Promotion of international cooperation for the benefit of States Parties through the transfer of technology, material and equipment for peaceful purposes in the chemical field and removal of any discriminatory restrictions such as unilateral sanctions against other States Parties that are contrary to the letter and spirit of the Convention and affect the Convention's long-term viability and have an adverse impact on the existing trust among the States Parties.

Madam Chairperson

The African Group welcomes the establishment of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Future Proprieties – under the co-Chairmanship of H.E. Vusi Bruce Koloane of South Africa and H.E. Sabine Nölke of Canada – to discuss and formulate a document

on the future priorities of the OPCW, in order to be adopted at the Fourth Review Conference. We reiterate the importance of this Working Group and encourage its close cooperation with all regional groups.

The African Group will constructively engage in the discussions, particularly through the proposed African Programme Review Based Mechanisms, with a strong belief that all pillars of the Convention would be treated in a balanced manner, including the ones related to international cooperation, assistance and protection issues, amongst others.

The African Group also commends the work of the Chairperson of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism, H.E. Dr. Joe Tony Aidoo of Ghana and the Chairperson of the Sub-Working Group on Non-State Actors, H.E. Maria Teresa Infante of Chile. We further take note of the latest report presented by the Chairperson of the Sub-Working Group on Non-State Actors referring to what the OPCW can do within the framework of the Convention to strengthen its capabilities in the field of prevention and responses. Owing to the divergent views, the African Group wishes to encourage further consultations on this matter.

On Education and Outreach, the African Group recognizes the importance of the programmes in achieving the main objectives of the Convention. In this regard we welcome the work done by the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach. We also welcome all regional meetings held to contribute in formulating recommendations on education and outreach.

On new appointments, the African Group welcomes the appointment of a new Director of the Office of Legal Adviser, Mr. Trevor Michael Rajah and we look forward to working with him to achieve the objectives of the Organization as a whole.

In conclusion, the African Group would like to note, with deep regret, the non-adoption of the report of EC-82, which was as a result of a lack of consensus on some important issues. At the time, the Group noted the extensive work of Member States that had gone into other equally important matters then and called on member to not ignore them.

We, therefore, urge the members of the Council to work in a collaborative manner in order to achieve consensus and a successful ending of the present session and adopt a report, as is the tradition of the Organization.

I thank you for your attention.