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MOROCCO

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR ABDELOUAHAB BELLOUKI
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO TO THE
OPCW AT THE EIGHTY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,
Mr Director-General,
Excellencies,
Dear colleagues,

First of all, it is a pleasure for me to welcome once again Ambassador Sheikh Mohammed Belal, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh, as Chairperson of the Executive Council (hereinafter “the Council”). My delegation is confident that his human and professional qualities will help ensure a successful conclusion to our work. My delegation lends him its support and full cooperation.

It is also a pleasure for me to pay a warm tribute once again to the Director-General, Mr Ahmet Üzümcü, for the drive and dedication with which he has always led the OPCW. I also congratulate the members of the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter “the Secretariat”) for the commendable efforts they have undertaken with self-sacrifice to help ensure the proper functioning of our Organisation, and to raise its growing profile.

Likewise, I should also like to congratulate Ambassador Fernando Arias of Spain for achieving a broad consensus in regard to his nomination as the next Director-General of the Organisation. Ambassador Belal is also worthy of our recognition, for having supervised the nomination process to our great satisfaction. We should also like to thank the six candidates, who joined the consensus, for their spirit of cooperation and for helping to make this process a success.

My delegation fully supports the statement of the Group of African States, which I had the honour to deliver as Coordinator of that Group, as well as the statement made by Ambassador Haifa Aissami Madah, Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and China.

My delegation welcomes the launch of the fourth phase of the OPCW Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa on the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter “the Convention”), for a period of three years effective 1 January 2017. In this connection, my country wishes to express its gratitude to the Secretariat and to the various donors for the support they have given to this Programme, whose success undeniably depends on a more stable and lasting funding base.



The different activities undertaken by the Secretariat in this connection, covering national implementation of the Convention (Article VII), assistance and protection (Article X), and the peaceful use of chemistry (Article XI), allow certain African beneficiary States Parties to improve their capabilities and to comply with various provisions of the Convention.

It is the hope of my delegation that the Africa Programme will accurately reflect African countries' legitimate aspirations and expectations that the Programme be made more effective and viable. The pragmatic approach adopted by the Director-General in his Note regarding the strengthening of the Programme (EC-86/DG.18 C-22/DG.14, dated 12 September 2017) is an important tool and provides sound guidance in this regard.

Furthermore, it is important to underscore that many African countries do not have the necessary means to adequately discharge their obligations under the Convention or to protect themselves against the use of toxic chemicals for hostile purposes.

The OPCW should therefore strengthen the assistance it provides to the States Parties that request it, so that these States may benefit from OPCW cooperation and protection programmes in various areas.

Regarding the destruction of remaining chemical weapons stockpiles, Morocco reiterates its principled position in support of complete disarmament in accordance with the Convention and the decisions of the governing bodies, subject to strict and effective international control.

In this regard, my country welcomes the progress made in regard to the process of destruction of category 2 chemical weapons in Libya, in accordance with Libya's obligations under the Convention.

In the same connection, my delegation welcomes the recent statement of the Director-General on 27 September 2017 regarding the completion of the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles in the Russian Federation, a country we congratulate for the efforts it has made to this end.

Furthermore, we should like to take this opportunity to encourage States Parties to respect the deadlines for the complete destruction of their stockpiles.

My country recognises the importance of the programmes that have been set up in the areas of education and outreach to achieve the primary objectives of the Convention. In this connection, we praise the work that has been accomplished by the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach, including all of the regional meetings that have been held to contribute to the formulation of relevant recommendations in these areas.

With regard to the fight against terrorism, my country voices its support for the efforts and activities undertaken by the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism (hereinafter "the Working Group on Terrorism") chaired by Ambassador Momar Diop, Permanent Representative of Senegal, as well as the coordination work undertaken with various international organisations, in particular the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF).

The conclusions of the Working Group on Terrorism should allow our Organisation to adapt its activities significantly in order to prevent any possibility of use of chemicals for purposes prohibited by the Convention.

Morocco also wishes to praise the work of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Future Priorities of the OPCW, co-chaired by Ambassador Vusi Bruce Koloane of South Africa and Ambassador Sabine Nölke of Canada. The recommendations of the Group in the run-up to the Fourth Review Conference are extremely important. We strongly encourage the Group to continue its work on the basis of inclusive consultations and in a spirit of consensus.

My delegation has taken note of the Director-General's latest report (EC-86/DG.2) regarding the new round of high-level consultations from 16 to 18 September 2017 between the Syrian Arab Republic and the Secretariat on the progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. It notes with regret that the outstanding issues surrounding the Syrian initial declaration have not been completely resolved.

In this regard, my country deeply regrets that the Declaration Assessment Team was not in a position to verify fully that the declaration and other information presented by Syria is complete and correct, as required by the Convention and Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1.

My delegation hopes that Syria will therefore continue to cooperate more strongly with the Secretariat by providing answers to all of the outstanding issues.

In conclusion, my delegation considers that the Twentieth Anniversary of our Organisation, which was a worthy recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, should encourage us to redouble our efforts and to strengthen our unwavering commitment to achieving a world free from chemical weapons. This strategic objective of ours also requires sustained and resolute action to achieve universality of the Convention, which is essential to enhancing the implementation of our common commitments.

Thank you for your attention.

Mr Chairperson, I would ask that this statement be published as an official document of the Eighty-Sixth Session of the Council.

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