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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-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

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

First of all, Mr Chairperson, I should like to express my delegation's delight in seeing you once again brilliantly preside over our work. Allow me to renew, Ambassador Sheikh Mohammed Belal of Bangladesh, the expression of our full confidence and esteem for your human and professional qualities. My delegation offers its continued support and full cooperation to help you complete our work in an atmosphere of consensus and calm.

I am also pleased to express my profound gratitude to Mr Ahmet Üzümcü, the Director-General, for his unwavering commitment in ably leading our Organisation in the conduct of its noble mission. I should also like to pay a warm tribute to all of the Technical Secretariat staff for their tireless and commendable efforts, which have ensured that the Organisation remains effective and continues to enjoy well-deserved visibility.

It goes without saying that my delegation fully aligns itself with the statement of the African Group, which I had the honour to deliver as coordinator of that Group, and with the statement of the Non-Aligned Movement and China, delivered by Ms Haifa Aissami Madah, Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Also allow me to reiterate my gratitude for the trust that was been placed in my country in chairing the Twenty-Second Session of the Conference of the States Parties ("the Conference") held in The Hague from 27 November to 1 December 2017. I had the distinct honour of presiding over our work and, once again, as Chairperson of the Conference, should like to express my willingness to contribute to the noble objectives of the Organisation and my commitment to those objectives. My delegation and I will remain at your disposal and in the service of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention ("the Convention") to successfully carry out our mission.

Morocco once again reiterates its strong condemnation, today and forever, of the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, under any circumstances, and for whatever reason. It is a flagrant violation of the Convention, the decisions of the Executive Council, and the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council, and of the relevant rules of international law.



On this subject, Morocco supports the efforts undertaken in accordance with international law by the International Partnership Against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons, which was established in Paris on 23 January 2018.

My delegation welcomes the launch, slightly over a year ago in January 2017, of the fourth phase of the OPCW Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa on the Convention, for a period of three years.

The effective launch of this phase demonstrates the importance that African States Parties, their partners, and the Technical Secretariat have attached to achieving the objectives of the Convention, including the strengthening of chemical safety and security and the use of chemistry for inclusive and sustainable development, for a peaceful and prosperous Africa.

My country supports this Programme, which was developed in consultation with African countries according to their needs, so that they can overcome the barriers to the development of their national capacities. Nevertheless, my delegation is of the view that an in-depth evaluation of the Africa Programme, which takes into account each African State Party's realities on the ground, would allow the beneficiaries to better take advantage of the Programme. In this connection, the Steering Committee, which was set up to provide advice and guidance for Programme implementation, could contribute actively to this effort.

With regard to budgetary support, Morocco wishes to reiterate its gratitude for the voluntary contributions to this Programme, but nevertheless considers that its success depends without question on a more stable and lasting financial base.

In addition, the recommended approach of relying on synergies developed by African economic communities has proved relevant to the extent that it allows for an optimisation of the resources allocated to the Programme, with a tangible impact on the subregional situation.

Moreover, my delegation wishes to underscore the importance that should be attached to the implementation of Article X (Assistance and Protection Against Chemical Weapons) and Article XI (Economic and Technological Development) of the Convention. The peaceful use of chemistry and the extent of international cooperation in economic and technological development are indeed especially important for Africa.

On this subject, I welcome that a workshop was held at the OPCW on 21 November 2017 on the subjects of integrated chemicals management, the strengthening of laboratory capacities, and the promotion of knowledge on chemicals. My delegation is also pleased that a similar workshop will be held on 2 May 2018.

Regarding progress in the destruction of chemical weapons, my country welcomes the full completion of the process to destroy chemical weapons in Libya. It would also like to commend the destruction of the entire stockpile of chemical weapons declared by the Russian Federation and, most recently, by Iraq.

Furthermore, we should like to take this opportunity to strongly encourage the steady continuation of efforts aimed at the complete destruction of remaining chemical weapons stockpiles.

While we take note of the recent progress regarding the destruction of chemical weapons production facilities declared by the Syrian Arab Republic (EC-87/DG.16, dated

23 February 2018), my country encourages the continuation of dialogue between that State Party and the Technical Secretariat to ensure optimal implementation of the provisions of the Convention and the relevant decisions on this matter.

In this context, my delegation takes note of the latest report of the Declaration Assessment Team and notes that despite the progress made, several outstanding questions remain unanswered.

My delegation strongly condemns the proven and continued use of chemical weapons in Syria and underscores the need for the perpetrators to be held accountable.

With regard to the fight against terrorism, my country supports the efforts and activities undertaken by the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism chaired by Mr Momar Diop, Permanent Representative of Senegal to the OPCW, and those of its Sub-Working Group on Non-State Actors, chaired by Ms María Teresa Infante, Permanent Representative of Chile to the OPCW.

It is appropriate to underscore that the risk posed by the use of chemicals as weapons by non-State actors should be a matter of constant concern for us all. African States Parties must have the appropriate capacity to deal with such a risk and should be able to count on the assistance of the Technical Secretariat and partner States Parties to achieve this objective.

In this connection, my country wishes to underscore the importance of the Rapid Response and Assistance Mission, an initiative aimed at promoting the expertise and capabilities of the Organisation in the fight against chemical terrorism. This will allow for emergency measures of assistance to be provided to a State Party affected by an incident of alleged use of toxic chemicals by a non-State actor.

My delegation would like to express its support for this initiative, which is particularly important considering the context of our region, where the threat of terrorist groups is a cause of increasing concern.

In this context, Morocco supports the OPCW's initiative in organising the Conference on Countering Chemical Terrorism, scheduled for 7 and 8 June 2018 in The Hague, which is aimed at evaluating the ways to strengthen international cooperation to respond to the threat of chemical terrorism.

Moreover, Morocco welcomes the work carried out by the Open-Ended Working Group on the Future Priorities of the OPCW, ably co-chaired by Ambassador Vusi Bruce Koloane of South Africa and Ambassador Sabine Nölke of Canada. That Group's recommendations to the Open-Ended Working Group for the Preparation of the Fourth Review Conference will undoubtedly help to fuel the discussions on the priorities of the Organisation, our common challenges, and the issues on the horizon.

Likewise, my delegation expresses its full support for the Open-Ended Working Group for the Preparation of the Fourth Review Conference, chaired by Mr I Gusti Agung Wesaka Puja, Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the OPCW. The success of the Fourth Review Conference will indeed depend, among other things, on the involvement of all of the States Parties in the decisive process carried out by this Working Group, in particular by contributing with their ideas and inputs to ensure the success of the Review Conference and by reflecting together on the OPCW's future challenges, including through a thorough

assessment of the implementation of the Convention and its universality, which must remain a strategic objective for the Organisation and the States Parties, as well as other stakeholders.

My country wishes to praise the accomplishments of the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach and my delegation welcomes the publication of the report (ABEO-5/1, dated 12 February 2018) on its activities and on the role of education and outreach in the prevention of the re-emergence of chemical weapons, covering the period January to September 2017. The transition period in which the Organisation already finds itself prompts us to think harder about the resources we need to put in place to achieve the noble aim of preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons. The various education and outreach methods recommended by the Board, including active learning, are promising avenues that will ensure better ownership of the Convention by all of its stakeholders: students, educators, the scientific community, chemical industry, and civil society. In addition, my country welcomes and supports the organisation of regional meetings of National Authorities in the area of education and outreach.

Aware of the importance of education and outreach activities, my country organised several workshops, colloquiums, and training courses aimed at strengthening chemical and biological safety and security, which were intended for academics, researchers in various disciplines, university students, and civil society representatives.

My delegation should not forget to express my country's pride and gratitude for having been selected to host the sixteenth regional meeting of National Authorities of African States Parties, which will be held from 19 to 21 June 2018 in Marrakesh.

This meeting will be an opportunity for National Authorities, stakeholders, and representatives of the relevant international organisations to share their views on how they can strengthen their cooperation and improve the control of cross-border movements of chemicals at the regional level.

In conclusion, I would like to point out that the city of Marrakesh will also have the privilege of hosting, from 29 to 31 October 2018, the eighteenth annual assistance and protection coordination workshop. This exercise will allow States Parties and the Technical Secretariat to interact with a view to gathering contributions from all the regions in order to develop recommendations that will improve assistance and protection programmes. The objective is to help the States Parties discharge their obligations under Article X of the Convention.

I thank you for your attention.

I would ask that this statement be considered as an official document of the Eighty-Seventh Session of the Executive Council.

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