



STATEMENT OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA AT THE 45TH
MEETING OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (ECM-45) DELIVERED BY
HER EXCELLENCY, DR. (MRS.) N. N. AKANBI, OON, AMBASSADOR TO
THE NETHERLANDS AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE
ORGANISATION OF THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS
(OPCW)

Mr. Chairperson,

Nigeria wishes to welcome you back to the chair of this 45th Meeting of the Executive Council. We have no doubt that under your chairmanship, the meeting will be professionally guided to a successful conclusion.

Today's agenda is singular in nature – the key findings of the Second Report of the Fact-Finding Mission over the alleged use of Chlorine gas in Syria.

Each time there is an allegation of the use of chemical weapons, the world is appalled. Each time the use is confirmed, we are all shocked. However, above it all, each time we go down that whole path, we pray that it will be for the last time. Unfortunately, this does not seem to be the case. As such, Nigeria believes that we must redouble our efforts as the Chemical weapons watchdog of the world to cleanse the world of both users of chemical weapons and the weapons themselves.

On this note, we wish to commend and encourage the members of the Fact-Finding mission for their continued bravery and dedication to the cause for

the good of mankind. After their close shave when their convoy was attacked, we are sure the operation lost much of its appeal. Consequently, for all who still stand today as members of that body of immense global importance, we say a hearty and proud – Well done!

In this same vein, we wish to fully support the request of the Director-General (DG) for the continuation of the work of the Fact-Finding Mission. Non-continuation would defeat the whole object of its creation in the first place. As such, we must support it, drive it and keep it alive for as long as the work it does remains relevant in the world.

Mr Chairman,

It is also important that the OPCW does all within its capabilities to support victims of chemical weapons through existing mechanisms and countries with the ability to volunteer even more help should be encouraged to do so without delay.

Nigeria also wishes to use this forum to condemn in its totality, the use of chemical weapons in Syria which has been confirmed by our competent body. The 'who by' is perhaps outside the mandate of the Fact-Finding Mission. However, regardless of which quarters are guilty of use, the act in itself is universally agreed as wrong and totally unacceptable. According to the wordings when the Fact-Finding Mission was established, its mandate was to ----*establish the facts surrounding allegations of the use of toxic chemicals, reportedly chlorine, for hostile purposes in the Syrian Arab Republic.* The facts found reveal to all of us seated here, that indeed Chlorine gas was administered for hostile purposes and so with one voice and in one accord, our clear common ground should be its outright condemnation.

That having been said, we would recommend that further investigations should be carried out with a view to obtaining even more technical and scientific facts that will further strengthen their submission. This is due to the fact that while the second Fact-Finding Mission report was commendably thorough, this area could still be augmented. We would also wish to use this opportunity to join some other member-states to recommend that the Director-General (DG) consider expanding the technical expertise of the Mission.

Finally Mr. Chairman,

Nigeria is of the humble opinion that moving forward, states parties need to endeavour to remember that we are all on the same side – the side against chemical weapons. In order to achieve optimal success in this venture, we must dwell more on areas where we agree and put aside political considerations that often risk clouding humanitarian objectives. In the fight against chemical weapons, we also encourage all to remember that one of the mantras of my country Nigeria applies strongly here and that is the popular saying that – *united we stand, and divided we fall*.

I thank you for your attention and wish to request that this Statement be issued as an official document of this meeting and uploaded on the extranet.