

**STATEMENT BY H.E. PETER GOOSEN, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICA GROUP OF STATES
PARTIES TO THE CWC (CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION),**

**EIGHTEENTH (18TH) SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES
(CSP-18),**

02 DECEMBER 2013.

Mr. Chairperson,

1. On behalf of the Africa Group, I would like to congratulate you on your election as Chairperson of the Eighteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties. We are confident that you will steer our work towards a successful conclusion and we assure you of our full cooperation and support in your efforts.
2. I am also pleased to convey the Africa Group's appreciation to the outgoing Chairperson, H.E. Mr. Peter Goosen, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of South Africa, for his commitment and hard work as Chairperson of the Seventeenth Session of the Conference of States Parties (CSP-17).
3. The Africa Group of States Parties associates itself with the statement made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and China by H.E. S.A. Araghchi, Deputy Minister for International Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran.
4. The Group has also taken note of the Opening Statement by Amb. Ahmed Uzumcu, Director-General (DG) of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on its activities and wishes to express its

appreciation for the professional manner in which he continues to manage the affairs of the Organization. We would also like to congratulate the DG on his re-appointment to continue to lead this Organization and pledge our full support and cooperation to him as he steers it to maintain its important role of contributing towards global peace and security.

Mr. Chairperson,

5. 2013 has been a year of challenges and of expectations for the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), and for its implementing agency, the OPCW. In the recent months, the Organization has confronted great challenges, not least of which has been the use of chemical weapons in Syria, for which an accelerated regime has been established for the destruction of that country's chemical weapons and the expectation that inevitably comes with having been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.
6. These recent challenges and expectations follow on the disappointment of 2012 when three (3) of the chemical weapons possessor States Parties (Libya, the Russian Federation and the United States) failed to comply with the Chemical Weapons Convention's final extended deadline for the destruction of their chemical weapons, and when the Organization also had to establish an extraordinary regime to provide for the completion of the destruction processes in these countries.
7. These events, and more particularly the conflict in Syria, have thrust the OPCW on to center stage. While the Organization had previously been working outside the limelight, the television images of OPCW inspectors investigating allegations of use and verifying destruction has turned the spotlight on to the Organization and its work. The decision to award the Nobel Peace Prize will give the OPCW greater authority to address the challenges in Syria and elsewhere, but it will also

impose an expectation for the organization to play its part in meeting the international community's aspiration for a world free of the threat of the use of chemical weapons. It is an inevitable fact of life that with greater authority and with greater expectation comes greater responsibility.

8. The CWC remains the only multilaterally negotiated, non-discriminatory and internationally verifiable instrument for the destruction of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. As a Nobel Laureate, the OPCW must therefore act without fear or favor in achieving the objectives that have been set by its negotiators and by the States that have taken the honorable step to become its States Parties.
9. As the international community stands in opposition to the use or threat of use of chemical weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and as the international community strives to achieve the ideals that are encompassed by the Nobel Peace Prize, it is imperative that those few States that continue to remain outsiders to the Convention should join the CWC without further delay. This is especially the case with those non-States Parties that find themselves in regions that are plagued by conflict. As Syria has yet again shown us, the peace that was aspired to by Alfred Nobel will not be found in the false security of weapons of mass destruction. It is to be found in the peaceful resolution of disputes and through meeting the needs as well as the aspirations of all of our peoples.
10. The OPCW has joined a much-vaunted gallery of "greats". It now stands together in the same arena as Woodrow Wilson, who championed the establishment of the League of Nations after World War I; the International Committee for the Red Cross and the Red Crescent, which has gone to the aid of those who suffer at the hands of war, pestilence and disaster; Andrei Sakharov and Joseph Rotblat, who raised his voice against the threat of nuclear war. The

Organization has been joined with leaders such as Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, Albert Luthuli, Anwar Sadat, Lech Walesa, Yaser Arafat, Yitzak Rabin, and Aung San SuuKyi who have stood out amongst their peers for what is right and just. It has been partnered with other international organizations such as the United Nations, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the UNHCR, which have also been awarded the Nobel Prize for their contributions to a safer and better world. It is now for the OPCW and its member States to strive to reach the heights that have been scaled by those that have gone before.

Mr. Chairperson,

11. Now turning to specific issues that are to be considered at this Conference, the Africa Group has taken note of the presentations and reports that have been made by both the Technical Secretariat and the States Parties concerned, on the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles, old chemical weapons and abandoned chemical weapons, and would like to commend the States Parties concerned on the progress that they continue to make towards meeting their obligations and realizing the core objective of the Convention by ensuring the destruction of all chemical weapons in their possession with a view to eliminating their threat to international peace and security. In this context, the Group continues to regret the fact that the 29 April 2012 final extended deadline was not fully met by the States Parties concerned. The Group wishes to stress that the destruction of chemical weapons is the fundamental and top priority of the Organization and urge all possessor States Parties to take every necessary measure to ensure their destruction in the shortest possible time in line with the decisions of the Executive Council and the Conference of States Parties on destruction-related activities and in accordance with the provisions of the Convention.

Mr. Chairperson,

the Full Implementation of Article XI', an outcome of the recommendations of the November 2010 Workshop where pertinent elements of the CSP-16 decision on Article XI were drawn to continuously enhance and develop further concrete measures and recommendations, it is important to underline that this decision facilitated the crucial initial road-map for the essential and continuous full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of Article XI.

The decision by the CSP-16 on the implementation of the Article XI is an important step in building comprehensive approaches to international cooperation. It brings together different areas, including national cooperation, assistance, efforts against terrorism, chemical safety and chemical security. Its implementation will promote international cooperation from the perspective of economic development, improving security and enhancing national implementation of the provisions of the Convention.

However, the Africa Group strongly urges States Parties to consider the OPCW Technical Secretariat's evaluations of the concluded activities of Article XI with a view to enhancing the implementation of the CSP-16 Decision and Article XI in its entirety.

15. The Africa Group continues to appreciate the Director-General's efforts to strengthen cooperation with African States Parties through the Africa Programme. The Group believes these efforts provide strategic direction to the engagement with the Technical Secretariat and the African Group of States Parties. They are also geared towards the full and effective implementation of the Convention as they address factors that hinder the development of national capacities of African States Parties, with a view to encouraging progress towards their successful implementation of the CWC. In addition, they aim to enhance national protective capacities and increase participation by African States Parties in programmes and activities that promote the use of chemistry for peaceful purposes as the importance of the obligations contained in the Convention to promote the peaceful application of chemistry cannot be underestimated. The

work that is being undertaken under this programme should continue as it has a positive impact on the achievement of other priority objectives of the Convention, such as universality and national implementation measures.

Mr. Chairperson,

16. The Africa Group commends the work of the Chairperson, H.E. Dr. (Mrs) N.N. Akanbi, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, to the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism (OEWG-T). We believe the discussions taking place under her stewardship in informal consultations in the OEWG will result in practical outcomes that will enable the Organization to contribute meaningfully to the global efforts to combat terrorism.

Finally, Mr Chairperson,

1. As we indicated earlier during this statement, the Africa Group wishes to express its appreciation for the professional manner in which the Director-General continues to manage the affairs of the Organization. We would also like to congratulate the DG on his re-appointment to continue to lead this Organization and pledge our full support and cooperation to him as he steers it to maintain its important role of contributing towards global peace and security. This next term of office, is – from the very beginning – being shaped by significant challenges that lie ahead and by the weighty responsibilities that rest on all our shoulders.
2. Mr Chairperson, I thank you and would like to request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Eighteenth Session of the Conference of States Parties.