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Chemical Weapons Convention
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Progress towards implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention in Africa

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Good afternoon. My name is Amelia Broodryk and I am a senior researcher at the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) based in South Africa. ISS is an applied policy research institute working for the advancement of sustainable human security in Africa. It seeks to mainstream human security perspectives into public policy processes and to influence decision makers within Africa and beyond and as such, undertakes applied policy research, provides teaching and training as well as technical assistance. Since 2007, our project's aim has been to enhance Africa's role in international efforts to strengthen weapons of mass destruction disarmament and non-proliferation in the context of Africa's developmental imperatives.

The near-universalisation of the CWC in Africa is a testament to the continent's commitment to ensuring that the misuse of dangerous chemicals never occurs in Africa or anywhere else in the world. We urge the remaining three African countries, Angola, Egypt and South Sudan, to accede to the CWC, thereby reinforcing the African Union's (AU) call for a Chemical Weapons-Free Zone in Africa – which is underscored by the 2006 Memorandum of Understanding between the AU and the OPCW. We also express our deep concern that a stockpile of more than 800 tonnes of industrial chemicals that could be weaponised remains undestroyed in Libya – an unacceptable situation given the deteriorating security environment in that country.

While it remains important to promote accession to the CWC, effective implementation of the convention in the existing African States Parties continues to be a challenge. There is still a low number of African States Parties with implementing legislation covering all key areas of the CWC, and many states are unable to provide national authorities with the necessary financial and human resources to monitor appropriate implementation of the CWC.

As a means to address the challenge of CWC implementation in Africa, the OPCW created the Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa. The programme, now in its third phase, has accomplished a great deal over the years, enabling Africans to participate in training courses and

workshops on relevant topics. The programme has also provided employment to African interns, offered support to attend CWC conferences and supplied functional equipment. As such, the OPCW's programmes yield direct economic benefits to a continent struggling to meet its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). From our experience, engagement in Africa must promote both the developmental benefits as well as the security dimensions of CWC membership.

The complementary nature of the OPCW and African civil society's activities in promoting international peace and security should form the foundation for increased co-operation. Given the resource constraints faced by most African countries, the OPCW, together with African States Parties, the African Union (AU), sub-regional organisations, the chemical industry and representatives from African civil society, should combine efforts and co-ordinate activities in order to make the best use of scarce resources and build sustainable processes. We recommend that all relevant stakeholders meet more regularly to discuss areas of mutual interest in order to determine priorities.

As a means to promote implementation of the CWC in Africa, we also propose that the OPCW meet and co-ordinate with other bodies, such as the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organisation, the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 Committee, as well as the African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE). Activities undertaken by these bodies, such as peer reviews between members, regional train-the-trainer courses and private sector engagement could also be implemented within the context of the CWC.

As the OPCW moves towards a post-destruction era, it is important to take stock of whether all articles of the CWC are being implemented and whether the convention is achieving its goals, not only in Africa, but everywhere in the world. The OPCW must remain a genuinely multi-lateral and legitimate forum where the decisions made by States Parties are fully implemented. Any real or perceived political imbalances between Member States should be addressed without delay. As civil society, we are ready to partner with the OPCW to fulfil its mandate of ridding the world of chemical weapons.

Thank you.