

**STATEMENT OF THE AFRICAN GROUP OF STATES PARTIES TO THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS  
CONVENTION (CWC) PRESENTED BY H.E. VUSI BRUCE KOLOANE, PERMANENT  
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA,  
TO THE NINETEENTH (19<sup>TH</sup>) SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES (CSP-19)  
01 DECEMBER 2014.**

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**Madam Chairperson,**

1. On behalf of the African Group, I would like to congratulate you on your election as Chairperson of the Nineteenth 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. Dr. Saad Abdul Majeed Ibrahim Al-Ali, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Iraq to the OPCW, for his commitment and hard work as Chairperson of the Eighteenth Session of the Conference of States Parties (CSP-18).
3. The African Group associates itself with the statement made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and China by H.E. S.A. Araghchi, Deputy for Legal and International Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the OPCW.
4. The Group has also taken note of the Opening Statement by the Director-General, HE Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü, on the activities of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and wishes to express its appreciation for the professional manner in which he continues to manage the affairs of the Organization. We also wish to recognize the professional support offered to him and to all States Parties by the Technical Secretariat.

**Madam Chairperson,**

5. With regard to the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles, old chemical weapons and abandoned chemical weapons, we take note of the progress that the States Parties concerned 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.

6. In this context, the Group continues to be disappointed that the 29 April 2012 final extended deadline was not fully met by the possessor States Parties. The Group wishes to stress that the destruction of chemical weapons is the fundamental and top priority of the Organization. We therefore urge all possessor States Parties to take every necessary measure to ensure their destruction in the shortest time possible in line with the related decisions of the Executive Council and the Conference of States Parties and in accordance with the provisions of the Convention.
7. To this end we take note of the revised planned completion date of 31 December 2020 by the Russian Federation on its destruction activities.
8. We also would like to congratulate Libya for the significant progress that has been achieved in the destruction of all its Category 1 chemical weapons, thereby contributing towards a world free of the threat of chemical weapons.

**Madam Chairperson,**

9. With regard to the elimination and destruction of chemical weapons in Syria, we welcome the total removal of all chemical materials and equipment by the Syrian Arab Republic in its territory before the deadline of 30 June 2014, thereby fulfilling its commitment in accordance with the provisions of the Executive Council's decision and the United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution 2118 of September 2013. We note the significant progress achieved and we commend Syria on this achievement. We recognize the efforts of the international community towards the speedy destruction of Syrian chemical weapons.
10. We further take note of the progress in relation to the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs). We remain hopeful that this operation will be completed at the earliest time possible.
11. With regard to the fact-finding mission (FFM) established by the Director-General to investigate alleged use of toxic chemicals in the Syrian Arab Republic, the African Group takes note of the reports that have been prepared on the matter. We further take note of the reservations, diverse views and interpretations expressed by States Parties on these reports which clearly points to a lack of consensus on the matter as it transpired at the 45<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Executive Council. We urge the FFM to take into consideration these reservations, diverse views and interpretations in concluding the final report on this matter.

In the same vein the Group wishes to reiterate its strongest condemnation of the use of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals as a weapon anywhere by anyone and under any circumstances as no cause could ever justify it. In this regard the African Group looks forward to the final report and to an objective closure on the work of the FFM.

12. On the Declaration Assessment Team activities, we look forward to the conclusion of the work in relation to the completeness of the Syrian Arab Republic's initial declaration.
13. We remain committed to meeting all our obligations in full by implementing our national obligations under the Convention and we continue to do all we can within our abilities to make progress on our national implementation measures.
14. We appreciate the efforts of the Technical Secretariat in assisting States Parties to enhance their national implementation measures. We urge the Technical Secretariat to continue with its activities and programmes aimed at advancing Article VII implementation. In this regard we support tailor-made approaches taking into account the different States Parties' circumstances.
15. Furthermore, we continue to urge the Organization to assist States Parties to develop their chemical industrial capacities for peaceful purposes. We believe doing so will stimulate their interest in the Chemical Weapons Convention and significantly enhance their ability to contribute to the maintenance of regional and international peace and security.
16. The African Group agrees that some focused efforts are necessary to achieve the implementation of Article VII and we support the ongoing discussions in this regard in the context of existing traditional framework of Article VII facilitation.
17. The African States Parties attach great value to the implementation of Article X, which provides assistance and protection to States Parties against use and threat of use of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals. We believe it is important to ensure practical capacity-building as well as transfer of materials and equipment to deal with chemical incidents on a regional and sub-regional basis. The movement of chemicals across borders also calls for collective efforts of States Parties and a responsive Organization that is able to address a wide range of chemical-related incidents.
18. We also take note of the activities of the OPCW on assistance and protection against the use and threat of use of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals, and we commend the Technical Secretariat for its activities and programmes in this regard. We further call on the Organization to

keep States Parties updated on the status of its readiness to assist States Parties during incidents related to the use of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals. We further look forward to the ongoing work in the facilitation of Article X.

**Madam Chairperson,**

19. The decision by the Sixteenth (16<sup>th</sup>) Session of the Conference of States Parties (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 under CSP-16 Decision on Article XI with a view to further enhance the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of Article XI. In this regard the African Group welcomes the Facilitator's Informal Document incorporating additional elements and any other proposals. We recognize that much work is yet to be done, but the African Group remains optimistic in achieving concrete outcomes. We strongly urge delegations to constructively engage in discussions and open-mindedly consider proposals to ensure that the spirit of the work being conducted in informal consultations remains cordial and productive.

**Madam Chairperson,**

20. On the Draft 2015 Programme and Budget, we commend the facilitators and the Technical Secretariat for their hard work in facilitating consultations that led to the agreement reached at Seventy-Seventh Session of the Executive Council in October 2014. We also commend States Parties for the compromises they made and the Technical Secretariat for the support it rendered during the discussions. We expect that the budgetary proposals would be disbursed in a full, effective and non-discriminatory manner to enhance the achievement of the programmes and activities of the Organization.

**Madam Chairperson,**

21. 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.

22. 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,**

23. 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 and action-oriented outcomes that will enable the Organization to effectively contribute to the global efforts to combat terrorism.
24. With regards to the draft decision on rehiring of inspectors, the African Group believes that the element of sustainable capacity-building initiatives and transfer of knowledge activities in the Inspectorate Division is a matter of principle and necessity to incorporate as it would ensure that also States Parties with limited and/or no chemical industries benefit and that their interest in the Convention is further stimulated. This element is also necessary in the draft decision as it forms a two-part process that would lead to a sustainable outcome of retaining skills and knowledge while enhancing the unique capacities needed in the Inspectorate Division.
25. Finally, Mr Chairperson, I thank you and would like to request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Nineteenth Session of the Conference of States Parties.

