

## **KINGDOM OF MOROCCO**

### **STATEMENT DELIVERED BY H.E. Mr. MOHAMED BASRI, AMBASSADOR, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO TO THE ORGANIZATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS AT THE TWENTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES**

**(The Hague, 25 November-29 November 2024)**

**Mr. Chairperson,  
Mr. Director General,  
Excellencies,  
Dear Colleagues,**

I would like first to express my warmest congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Almir Šahović, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the OPCW, on his appointment as President of the 29<sup>th</sup> Session of the Conference of the States Parties and convey to him the full support of the Moroccan delegation, while wishing the work of our Conference all the success.

I would also like to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Suljuk Mustansar Tarar, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the OPCW, for his remarkable efforts and brilliant Presidency of the 28<sup>th</sup> Session of the Conference.

Furthermore, I would like to express the continued support of the Moroccan delegation to the Director General of the OPCW, His Excellency Mr. Fernando Arias, for his constant and unwavering commitment to achieving the noble objectives of our Organization, as well as for his relevant and informative report. This report is a valuable source of inspiration for the smooth running of our work. I take this opportunity to commend the professionalism and dedication of all members of the Technical Secretariat.

My delegation associates itself with the Statement of the African Group, delivered by the Coordinator, H.E. Mr. Francis Kotia, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Ghana, and that of the Non-Aligned Movement and China, delivered by H.E. Mrs. Mirjam Blaak Sow, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Uganda.

**Mr Chairperson,**

The long-standing cooperation between Morocco and the OPCW, in the service of the noble objectives of the Convention, has once again distinguished itself this year 2024 which has witnessed an exceptional dynamic, which was especially illustrated by the holding in Morocco of the very First International Conference on the Role of Artificial Intelligence in the Implementation of the Convention (Rabat Conference on AI, October 2024).

This dynamic testifies to the Kingdom's unwavering commitment, as a credible partner, in the framework of the global effort to combat the use of chemical weapons. In this respect, Morocco reiterates, once again, its unconditional support for the noble objectives of the Convention and its commitment to work tirelessly for their implementation and, with the

greatest firmness, its condemnation of the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, in any circumstance and for any reason.

Morocco has always been committed to the global effort to end the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and continues to actively contribute to the initiatives of the international community against the proliferation of these weapons and their use, particularly by non-State actors.

In this regard, my delegation welcomes with interest the significant progress made, including the total and complete destruction of declared chemical weapons stockpiles. However, it is crucial not to lose sight of other persistent and emerging challenges.

My delegation was pleased to participate in the fruitful visit organized, jointly by Japan and China, for the Executive Council's delegation to the sites of the destruction of abandoned chemical weapons on the territory of China and remains convinced that the momentum of cooperation between the two countries as well as joint efforts will lead to the completion of this exercise.

To achieve our common goal of a world definitively free of chemical weapons, the Kingdom of Morocco invites States Parties to persevere in a spirit of unity and constructive dialogue, in order to protect the norm, strengthen unity and preserve the technical character of our Organization.

**Mr. Chairperson,**

My delegation reiterates its call to maintain efforts aimed at strengthening the capacities of States Parties, particularly in Africa, in order to ensure a balanced and optimal implementation of the Convention. Capacity-building activities must remain a priority for our Organization, in order to enable States Parties to fully fulfill their obligations under the Convention and to contribute effectively and efficiently to the fight against the threat of chemical terrorism in the world.

In this regard, the Kingdom of Morocco, as a member of the Steering Committee of the Africa Program, welcomes the progress made within the framework of the 6<sup>th</sup> phase of the Program for Africa, and will continue to contribute to accelerate the implementation of the short and long-term objectives identified under the said Program for the term 2023-2025.

While expressing our thanks to the countries that make a voluntary financial contribution to this Program, my delegation believes that its sustainability depends essentially on a more stable and sustainable mode of financing ensured by the regular budget of the Organization. In this respect, the Kingdom of Morocco recalls with satisfaction the organization in Morocco, from June 24 to 27, 2024, of the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the training on the Preparation of Hospitals for Chemical Incidents HOSPREP, after a successful 1<sup>st</sup> edition organized at the end of 2022 as well as the advanced course under the theme "decontamination and mass evacuation" held in Rabat from September 16 to 21, 2024.

**Mr Chairperson,**

As you know, the Kingdom of Morocco jointly organized with the Technical Secretariat, the Rabat Conference on AI. To this end, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the valuable support and exemplary coordination of the OPCW Technical Secretariat in the

organization and success of this major international event, as well as my great appreciation of the quality of the partnership between Morocco and the OPCW.

This Conference brought together a significant number of government decision-makers, Moroccan and international experts, chemical industry and civil society stakeholders from different regions of the world, to discuss the issue of AI in relation to the implementation of the CWC, but also to explore ways to ensure responsible use of AI in the service of international peace and security. This conference was an opportunity to demonstrate once again the central role of the OPCW as a facilitator of cooperation between governments, scientists and industry stakeholders.

The discussions during this Conference highlighted many innovative aspects, particularly the immense potential of AI for the OPCW mandate, including the strengthening of verification capacities and chemical security. In addition, there was broad consensus on the need to responsibly regulate the use of this new technology in order to mitigate the risks of abusive use or any of its misuse, particularly by non-State actors.

In this perspective, the initiative of the Director General to create a temporary working group under the SAB, dedicated to the in-depth study of Artificial Intelligence and its implications, constitutes a relevant decision that will consolidate the results of the Rabat and Berlin Conferences and will allow the OPCW and the States Parties to move forward proactively in this field, by providing them with a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities related to AI.

In this regard, Morocco reaffirms its commitment to play a leading role in all initiatives aimed at strengthening the responsible use of AI and emerging technologies in the service of international peace and security. This Delegation stands ready to actively collaborate with the OPCW and the States Parties to promote innovative projects in this field and to participate in the development of cooperation platforms that will guarantee the ethical, peaceful and secure use of these technologies, while ensuring that they benefit all States Parties, particularly in Africa.

Morocco calls for pursuing an open and constructive dialogue within the OPCW on this important subject in order to respond to the challenges and make the most of the opportunities that AI can offer to States Parties and ultimately contribute to strengthening the implementation of the CWC. Morocco also wishes to highlight the strategic importance of the role played by the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) and the Advisory Board for Education and Outreach (ABEO) in deepening reflections and raising awareness on issues affecting, among others, science and technology. Their contribution is particularly crucial on current issues such as cross-cutting technologies, including artificial intelligence.

**Mr Chairperson,**

The threat of chemical terrorism remains a serious concern that challenges States Parties. In this context, my delegation welcomes the relevance of the activities of the Open-ended Working Group on Chemical Terrorism, Chairpersoned by HE Mr. Vusimuzi Madonsela, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of South Africa. With the support of the Secretariat, States Parties must equip themselves with the necessary capacities to counter this alarming and ever-increasing threat.

My delegation reiterates the need to deepen cooperation between the Secretariat and States Parties in the management of different categories of chemical emergencies, in particular, the aspects of prevention, threat assessment and first response to chemical terrorist attacks and by further encouraging a greater presence of women in the various workshops and training courses organized by the OPCW Technical Secretariat.

Furthermore, it is important to support and strengthen national legislations with the aim to combat chemical terrorism by non-State actors, including through the establishment of national mechanisms to control dual-use products, with a view to countering any threat of chemical terrorism. My delegation reaffirms the importance of South-South cooperation in capacity building and the exchange of good practices. Active South-South cooperation is also a lever to promote the implementation of the Convention, particularly in Africa.

**Mr. Chairperson,**

This Annual Conference is an appropriate opportunity for all States Parties to move forward, with determination and self-denial, and work collectively to uphold the global ban on the use of chemical weapons by redoubling our efforts and strengthening our commitment to a world without chemical weapons. My delegation will continue to support any proposal that will guarantee and ensure the proper functioning of the Organization and the effective fulfilment of its mandate.

I thank you for your kind attention and request that this statement be considered as an official document of the twenty-ninth session of the Conference of States Parties.