

STATEMENT DELIVERED BY MR. JEAN HUGUES MUKAMA, CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES A.I AND REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF RWANDA TO THE ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS (OPCW) TWENTY NINTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES (GENERAL DEBATE)

(THE HAGUE, 25-29 NOVEMBER 2024)

Chairperson,

Director-General,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

The Delegation of Rwanda welcomes H.E. Mr. Almir Šahović Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the OPCW as Chair of the Conference of State Parties. We assure you of our complete support in your upcoming task. We also take this opportunity to recognize the outstanding work of the outgoing Chair H.E. Mr. Suljuk Mustansar Tarar, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to the OPCW for his successful steering of the last Conference of State Parties.

The delegation of Rwanda also extend its appreciation to the Director-General, H.E. Mr. Fernando Arias, the Deputy Director-General, H.E. Odette Melono and the staff of the Technical Secretariat for their invaluable role in facilitating the implementation of the Convention.

The delegation of Rwanda associates itself with the statement of the Member States of the Africa group delivered by H.E. Francis Kotia Permanent Representative of Ghana. I would like to take this opportunity to make a few remarks in my national capacity.

Chairperson,

The delegation of Rwanda commends the work undertaken by the organization to promote capacity building in line with the effective implementation of the Convention. We appreciate the progress registered in the Sixth Phase of the OPCW Programme to strengthen cooperation with Africa and we believe that successful initiatives such as this one have the merit to benefit from predictability and sustainability ensured by funding under the regular budget and we call on the support of other State Parties on this matter.

The delegation of Rwanda also wishes to express its appreciation to the States Parties and other partners that see the importance of capacity building programmes in the implementation of the CWC and continue to make voluntary contributions to the Africa Programme.

We note the ongoing efforts of the Technical Secretariat in initiating tailor-made programmes in line with the needs and aspirations of States Parties, including enhancing technical capacities of chemical laboratories and centers of excellence on the African continent. We welcome the establishment of the National Institute of Criminalistics and Criminology of the Gendarmerie Nationale (NICC/GN) as an OPCW-designated laboratory and we believe that this milestone is a great example for the African region and hence looks forward to more cooperation with the TS and other stakeholder to increase the number of designated laboratories on the continent. The expansion of the OPCW-designated laboratories network to all regions is crucial in strengthening States Parties' capabilities in responding to any use or threat of use of Chemical Weapons.

Chairperson,

The delegation of Rwanda reaffirms its commitment to the principles of the Chemical Weapons Convention and notes the ongoing work of the Technical Secretariat in the Syrian dossier. We encourage the continuation of constructive cooperation between both parties and we welcome the 28th round of consultations held between the National Authority of the Syrian Arab Republic and the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) in September 2024. We commend the steps taken by the Syrian Arab Republic in that respect and strongly encourage the continuation of this spirit with the ultimate objective of resolving all the outstanding issues and close the dossier once and for all.

The delegation of Rwanda also commends the efforts of the TS, China and Japan in ensuring the destruction of Abandoned Chemical Weapons and commends both State Parties for their ongoing efforts under the supervision of the Technical Secretariat to achieve destruction of these Abandoned Chemical Weapons in China. We encourage both Parties to continue engaging constructively in order to facilitate the recovery and destruction of the afore-mentioned weapons within the set deadline.

Mr. Chairperson,

As we continue to advance on the agenda of complete destruction of chemical weapons, we must remain vigilant to the all too real concern of their re-emergence; recent technological advancements, the rise of non-state actors and the deteriorating security situation in various areas of the globe call for a comprehensive approach in dealing with these challenges. We call for greater cooperation among state parties and the technical secretariat in advancing capacity building that focuses on prevention measures, adequate policy making processes and regional realities.

The delegation of Rwanda commends the work of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism (OEWG-T) chaired by H.E. Ambassador Vusimuzi Philemon Madonsela of the Republic of South Africa and we look forward to further engagements with the aim of achieving global chemical security.

The delegation of Rwanda also recognizes the successful tenure of the First Global Conference on The Role of Artificial Intelligence in advancing the implementation of the CWC that was jointly organized by the Kingdom of Morocco and the Technical Secretariat in Rabat from 22-24 October 2024. We hope the outcome of the conference will significantly impact the efforts of the OPCW to prevent the use of Chemical Weapons via artificial intelligence. We hope that the conference will serve as a launch pad for further discussion on how emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence can be leveraged for the peaceful use of chemistry and scientific innovation.

Mr. Chairperson,

The delegation of Rwanda wishes underscores the merits of consensus based decision making as it enables States Parties to move swiftly towards the effective and full implementation of the mandate of the OPCW. We encourage all States Parties to privilege consensus building and preserve the technical nature of the Organization.

In conclusion, the delegation of Rwanda wishes to draw attention to the current voting procedures applied for the election of the members of the Executive Council. We encourage State Parties to revert back to Rule 85 of the Rules of procedure of the CSP and adopt the recommendations of the Africa Group's Non-Paper calling for a review of the existing practice. We believe that addressing this procedural matter and allowing delegations to exercise free will in the voting procedures will benefit the work of the organization.

I would like to kindly request that this statement be published on the public website of the OPCW and the catalyst as an official document of this session.

I thank you for your kind attention.