



**STATEMENT DELIVERED ON BEHALF OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA ON
THE OCCASION OF THE TWENTY NINTH SESSION OF CONFERENCE OF STATES
PARTIES (CSP -29)**

THE HAGUE, 25 to 29 NOVEMBER 2024.

Mr Chairperson,
Director-General,
Excellencies and Distinguished delegates,
Senior Members of the Technical Secretariat,

I would like to extend my delegation's heartiest felicitations to H.E. Ambassador Almin Šahović on his election as Chairperson of the Twenty-Ninth Session of the Conference of States Parties. As Bosnia and Herzegovina assumes the chair, we wish to thank H.E. Ambassador Suljuk Mustansar Tarar, Permanent Representative of Pakistan for his successful steering of the 28th Session of the Conference.

Chairperson, I wish to assure you of South Africa's full support. We look forward to working and cooperating with you in addressing the tasks before us and express our confidence in your stewardship of this session of the Conference.

South Africa aligns itself with the statements delivered by H.E Ambassador Fracis Kotia of Ghana on behalf of the African Group, and the Non-Aligned Movement and China delivered by H.E Ambassador Mirjam Blaak of Uganda.

Chairperson,

South Africa appreciates the continued efforts of the Director General, Deputy Director General and the Technical Secretariat to ensure the effective implementation of the Convention steering us towards the full realisation of the goal to which all States Parties have solemnly committed to - a world free of chemical weapons. In pursuit of this objective, the Chemical Weapons Convention has placed the elimination of all chemical weapons at the centre of the work of the OPCW. The OPCW is undertaking this task concomitantly with relentless efforts to tackle the re-emergence of chemical weapons, mitigate against the threat of emerging technologies and the risk of chemical weapons use, as well as the destruction of Old and Abandoned Chemical Weapons.

Yet, even as we gather in this session, much of humanity is confronted with the challenges of conflicts and instability. The international community remains gravely concerned about the persisting conflicts in Europe, the Middle East and various parts of Africa. The organisation should impartially and professionally investigate all instances of reported chemical weapons use, condemn any confirmed use of chemical weapons and discourage the threat of use of chemical weapons. South Africa will continue to condemn the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances.

Much progress has been made towards the non-proliferation of chemical weapons marked by the achievement of the destruction of 100 percent of all declared stockpiles. However, the complete elimination of all chemical weapons is a goal that can only be reached through collective action in good faith, with impartiality and transparency, as well as pursuit of fact-based reports.

Resolving all matters related to Syria remains a long outstanding and urgent task. We encourage the Technical Secretariat, the Declaration Assessment Team and the Syrian Arab Republic to cooperate constructively and exert all efforts towards resolving all outstanding matters without further delay.

Chairperson,

South Africa is a strong proponent of multilateralism and adherent to international law. We support the consistent and non-discriminatory application of provisions of the Convention in dealing with current challenges and emerging threats. Our collective efforts, cooperation and compromise by all States Parties, particularly given the current strained global security environment, are essential to ensure forward movement towards our shared objective of a world free of chemical weapons and to enable each State Party to fulfil its obligations under the Convention.

The technical mandate of the organisation as determined by the Convention is and should remain an essential area of focus for this organisation. States Parties should restrain from converting the Policy Making Organs of the OPCW into an arena for political battles in pursuit of the narrow political interests, thereby causing the OPCW to detract from attending to the pertinent technical and fundamental chemical issues that confront the world today. This remains an acute concern for South Africa

Universality remains a priority for the organisation. South Africa commends the Director-General's consistent and continuous high-level engagements with States that are yet to accede to or ratify the Convention. The status quo with States outside the Convention causes a delay in achieving our desired goal of a world free of chemical weapons.

The total elimination of all chemical weapons, as with other weapons of mass destruction, remains one of South Africa's key foreign policy priorities. While there are great benefits to be derived by humanity from many developments in the field of Artificial Intelligence, we recognise that there are also various challenges in the domain of emerging technologies which carry with them the threat of sophisticated methods of chemical weapons use. The organisation needs to be sufficiently agile to adapt to the speed at which Artificial Intelligence is advancing. This will require more effective use of science and technology by the ChemTech Centre, Scientific Advisory Board and closer collaboration between National Authorities of States Parties, the Technical Secretariat and civil society.

South Africa commends the continued cooperation between Japan and China and progress made towards the excavation and destruction of abandoned chemical

weapons in China, as demonstrated by the visit to China in September 2024. We encourage Japan and China to accelerate this process.

Chairperson

In closing, we would like to request that this statement be recorded as an official document of this Conference.