



**STATEMENT DELIVERED ON BEHALF OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA ON
THE OCCASION OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE
COUNCIL (EC-106)**

THE HAGUE, 9-12 JULY 2024.

Chairperson, Your Excellency Ambassador and the Permanent Representative of Ecuador, Mr Andrés Terán Parral ,
Director-General, Your Excellency Ambassador Fernando Arias,
Excellencies and Distinguished delegates,
Senior Members of the Technical Secretariat,

1. On behalf of the delegation of South Africa, I would like welcome Ambassador Andrés Terán Parral, the Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the OPCW on his stewardship of the 106th session of the Executive Council. We are confident that you will steer our deliberations to successful outcome. My delegation assures you of our unwavering support, commitment, and readiness to work with you during your tenure.
2. South Africa associates itself with the statement delivered by His Excellency, Ambassador Francis Danti Kotia, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Ghana, on behalf of the Group of African States Parties (“The Africa Group), as well as the statement delivered by Her Excellency, Ambassador Mirjam Blaak, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Uganda on behalf of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention that are Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement and China.

3. We thank the Director-General for his comprehensive report and express our gratitude to the staff of the Technical Secretariat for dedication in exercising their duties.
4. South Africa would like to reiterate her unwavering commitment to the Chemical Weapons Convention. We remain dedicated to the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of all the provisions of the Convention.
5. South Africa appreciates the post destruction era of the organisation, which requires the organisation to progressively move from being an instrument of disarmament to one whose major purpose is to prevent the re-emergence of chemical weapons. The potential for non-state actors to acquire or use chemical weapons compounded by the illicit trade in WMD related material, equipment and technologies that could assist non-state actors in acquiring new capabilities remains of grave concern as it continues to pose a threat to global security.
6. Universal adherence to the Convention is essential to combat the re-emergence of chemical weapons and prevent non-state actors from gaining access to them. For as long as there are states outside of the CWC, the world will continue to live under the threat of chemical weapons use by such states. States that have not acceded to or ratified the Convention are not legally obliged, and those which have signed only have a rather vague and limited general obligation not to defeat the object and purpose of the Convention. We support all efforts to achieve universality and urge states that are not Parties to join the Convention at the earliest. In addition to universality of membership of the Convention, there is also a need for universality of effective implementation of its provisions.
7. The reach of the Convention was recently tested by the reported indiscriminate use of white phosphorous by the Israeli military on the civilian population in Gaza. Where there is evidence of possible offensive use of chemicals that cause harm to victims, regardless of whether such chemicals are classified as chemical weapons under Article II of the Convention, the Technical Secretariat should provide assistance to States Parties as requested, in all instances where it can

be determined that such chemicals were used in a manner not consistent with the letter and spirit of the Convention.

8. We wish to express our satisfaction with the initial steps in the implementation of the Tenure Policy and commend the Secretariat for implementing it in the genuine quest to ensure the operational effectiveness and the financial stability of the OPCW.

Chairperson

9. We call for the destruction of old chemical weapons and abandoned chemical weapons to be completed in the shortest possible time and urge all affected States Parties to redouble and fast-track their efforts in that regard.
10. South Africa notes the Director-General's report on the progress in the elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme. We welcome the 27th round of consultations between the DAT and the Syrian National Authority, as well the next round of inspections of Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the Scientific Studies and Research Centre and look forward to the report by the Technical Secretariat. We encourage the continuation of the cooperation existing between the OPCW and the Syrian Arab Republic on all remaining issues.
11. As chair of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism, (OEWG-T), we look forward to the regional implementation of the Table-Top-Exercise. South Africa re-commits herself to continuous engagements and discussions with all States Parties, other fraternal International Organisations, and stakeholders in the global effort to combat the possession, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction by States and Non-State Actors alike.
12. South Africa attaches great importance to Article XI through international cooperation namely to promote and enhance chemistry skills especially in developing countries. As such South Africa has been conducting training on Analytical Chemistry for over ten years to African States Parties. This course has

greatly enhanced the capabilities of the participants in the area of chemical analyses related to the implementation of the CWC.

13. South Africa would like to congratulate Algeria for obtaining OPCW designation. We would also like to appreciate the projects undertaken by the OPCW to support laboratories from the African Region to advance their capabilities that will ultimately get them to achieve the designation.

14. Furthermore, South Africa has been actively participating in the OPCW Programme for Africa and that has strengthened our capabilities for implementation of the Convention. In the past years, we have hosted events in the areas of protection and response against chemical weapons attack, chemical laboratory analysis, chemical safety and security. For the first time in Africa, during 2023, the South African chemical industry successfully participated in the Associate Programme. This included hosting two Associate Programme participants for a period of 3 weeks to receive hands on exposure on modern practices in the chemical industry. We look forward to continue participating in this programme and adding value to capacity building programmes provided by the OPCW.

15. We would like to underscore the importance of enhancing capacity in Africa in the area of protection and response against chemical weapons attack and chemical incidents. We noted with concern that the Annual Assistance and Protection Course that South Africa has been hosting since 2005, providing training to approximately 290 experts and first responders from over 40 countries all over the Continent, will not be held in 2024 due to funding related challenges. South Africa encourages all States Parties to continue to contribute to the voluntary fund for assistance on a regular basis, so that the OPCW could be in a position to develop a state of readiness to provide timely, adequate and effective assistance and to respond positively to the increasing demands of States Parties for assistance. We would like to reiterate the importance of this course as it has been designed to cater for the specific Regional needs and exercises tailored to the competencies and needs of African States Parties.

Chairperson

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