



**STATEMENT DELIVERED ON BEHALF OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
ON THE OCCASION OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTH SESSION OF THE
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (EC-107)**

THE HAGUE, 8-11 October 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,

On behalf of the South African delegation, I would like to congratulate you, Mr Chairperson, upon your election to this position of immense responsibility which carries the hopes of all States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and assure you of my delegation's unwavering commitment to working with you and lending all the requisite support to lead to successful outcomes from the work of this session.

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.

We thank the Director-General for his comprehensive report and express our gratitude to the staff of the Technical Secretariat for their dedication in exercise of their duties.

South Africa reiterates her unwavering commitment to the Chemical Weapons Convention and remains dedicated to its full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of all its provisions without fear, favour or prejudice. We remain steadfast in our conviction that chemical weapons have no place in our world. Accordingly, we condemn the production, possession and use of any chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances.

South Africa is deeply concerned about the rising threat to international peace and security given the current geopolitical tensions. We insist that States Parties must abide by their international obligations and honour their commitments. We underscore that the OPCW is the only technically competent international authority in the field of chemical weapons. In this regard, we firmly believe that it remains pivotal that the work of the OPCW, through all its policy organs, including this Executive Council, is not politicised so we do not detract from the important and competent technical responsibilities this organisation is seized with.

Despite the achievement of 100% destruction of all declared chemical weapons stockpiles, the possibility of the re-emergence and use of chemical weapons remains one of the most serious threats to international peace and security. The constant threat of use of chemical weapons by non-state actors persists. That threat requires resolute collective action. South Africa continues to lead the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism, which is a platform that constitutes the nucleus of the OPCW's efforts, working in collaboration with organisations that share our commitment to addressing the growing risk of chemical terrorism. For its part, the OPCW is making strides

through its Capacity Building efforts under International Cooperation and Assistance, complemented by the Table-Top Exercises under the OEWG-T and Readiness Programme under CHEMEX-Africa. South Africa appreciates an increase in the participation of women in the Assistance and Protection Branch Training (APB).

While we welcome the development of new technologies which carry with them the possibility of advancing development, South Africa is gravely concerned about the speed thereof and the risks associated with new technologies that may fall into the wrong hands to facilitate the development of new chemical weapons. These new technologies which may further complicate efforts to counter potential and current threats. The OPCW, as a key instrument of the global non-proliferation regime and central to the maintenance of international peace and security, must remain agile. Efforts to support and strengthen the global chemical non-proliferation regime are more critical now than ever. Civil society has an important role to play in supporting non-proliferation.

Universal adherence to the Convention is essential to combat the re-emergence of chemical weapons and the prevention of 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. Accordingly, South Africa supports all efforts aimed at achieving the universality of the CWC 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 its effective universal implementation of its provisions.

Chairperson

South Africa calls for the destruction of Old Chemical Weapons (OCW) and Abandoned Chemical Weapons (ACW) to be completed in the shortest possible time. We acknowledge progress made thus far and urge all affected States Parties to

redouble and fast track their efforts in that regard. For as long as the OCW and ACW destruction is not complete, the total elimination of chemical weapons will remain elusive.

South Africa notes the Director-General's report on the progress being made in the elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme. We commend the outcomes of the 28th round of consultations between the DAT and the Syrian National Authority and welcome the progress being made as a positive indication of Syria's openness and readiness to cooperate with OPCW. We encourage the continuation of cooperation existing between the Syrian Arab Republic and the Technical Secretariat on all remaining issues and urge the parties to facilitate their expeditious resolution by respectively considering a request for and the provision of technical assistance and technical evaluation contemplated under Article VIII, paragraph 38(e) of the CWC. Similarly, the Technical Secretariat is urged to consider providing support contemplated under Article X of the CWC to the Syrian Arab Republic to deal with their reported threat of chemical weapons use against it by non-state actors. Accordingly, States Parties are urged to allow the Technical Secretariat attend to this matter purely within the technical mandate of the OPCW, free from geopolitical interests, in a manner that upholds trust in the organisation. States Parties must be aware that the recurring nature of these outstanding issues ultimately reflects negatively on the image of the OPCW.

South Africa welcomes the Mid-Biennium Draft Revised Programme and Budget of the OPCW for 2025. We commend the ABAF for its detailed review of the Draft Revised Programme and Budget, transparency and justifications of the changes proposed.

Chairperson

In closing, we would like to request that this statement be recorded as an official document of this Session and published on catalyst and the external server of the OPCW.