

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR OLUREMI OLIYIDE,
CHARGÉ D' AFFAIRES AND HEAD OF MISSION OF THE EMBASSY OF
THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA TO THE OPCW AT THE
TWENTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES
(CSP-29), 25 - 29 NOVEMBER 2024**

Mr. Chairperson,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

My delegation congratulates H.E. Almir Sahovic, the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina, on your assumption as the Chair of CSP-29. Please be rest assured of Nigeria's unflinching support.

Nigeria also commends Amb. Mr. Suljuk Mustansar Tarar, the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to the OPCW, for his sterling leadership in steering CSP-28 to a successful conclusion.

In the same way, my delegation lauds the efforts of the Director General, Ambassador Fernando Arias and the entire staff of the Technical Secretariat for their dedication.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation aligns with the Statement of the African Group delivered by Ambassador Francis Kotia, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Ghana, and the Statement of the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China, delivered by Ambassador Mirjam Sow, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Uganda to the OPCW.-

Mr. Chairman

The sustained effort of the Technical Secretariat in reaching out to States Parties yet to accede to the Convention is indeed commendable. My delegation believes that States Parties should collaborate more with the Technical Secretariat in achieving the onerous task of universalization through continuous dialogue with major stakeholders on the importance of the Chemical Weapons Convention in maintaining global peace and security.

The importance of the recent visit organized by the Technical Secretariat to monitor, inspect, and verify Abandoned Chemical Weapons (ACWs) on Chinese territory cannot be overemphasized. The visit demonstrated serious commitment and the transparency of the affected parties in compliance with their obligation under the Convention. My delegation calls for intensified mutual understanding and cooperation between the Chinese and Japanese authorities in resolving any disputes that may arise in fulfilling this herculean task.

Mr. Chairman

My delegation believes that if OPCW is to maintain its preeminent position as one of the leading disarmament institutions, it must incrementally invest in enhancing the capacity of National Authorities in its implementation effort, especially in the developing economies. The Organization should leverage its Mentorship and Partnership programs already instituted to provide States Parties with adequate support in their implementation efforts. On this note, my delegation commends the Technical Secretariat on the recently organized Associate Programme, targeted at building a network of professionals to provide technical assistance to their National Authorities in implementing the Convention from 29 July to 26 September 2024.

Mr. Chairman

The Africa Programme remains a veritable tool in the implementation of the Convention. Through the instrument, as enumerated during the Tenth Meeting of the Steering Committee held on 18 November 2024, States Parties from Africa have continued to witness giant strides in the implementation of the core objectives of the programme, such as the promotion of chemical knowledge; strengthening controls over cross-border transfer of toxic chemicals and enhancing protection and response capabilities against chemical incidents. It is gratifying to note that in 2024 alone, 67 activities were carried out with 750 participants spread across 43 States Parties in Africa. However, Nigeria urges the Technical Secretariat not to rest on its oars in order to achieve set objectives and deliverables as we approach the 2025 full delivery timeline.

Similarly, my delegation acknowledges the role played in the progress recorded so far in the implementation of the Sixth Phase of the program by Canada, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and the European Union through their contributions.

In the same vein, my delegation looks forward to collaborating with the delegation of the United States of America in organizing a Tabletop Exercise in Nigeria for ECOWAS States Parties under Article X of the Chemical Weapons Convention next year. It is our fervent hope that the Exercise will put ECOWAS Member States in good stead to respond effectively during chemical incidents as enshrined in the relevant article of the Convention.

Mr. Chairman

My delegation urges the Technical Secretariat to continue its collaboration with the Group of Experts constituted by the United Nations on the implementation of Resolution 1540 in order to provide capacity intensification for relevant institutions such as the police, the military, and public health institutions in all States Parties to prevent chemical attacks. Preparing the organization to anticipate this possibility would be in our best interest. My delegation acknowledges the unrelenting effort of the Technical Secretariat in facilitating the burgeoning discourse on chemical terrorism through capacity building programmes on disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to forestall chemical terrorism.

Furthermore, Nigeria congratulates the delegation of the Kingdom of Morocco and the Technical Secretariat for their collaboration in hosting the Global Conference on the Role of Artificial Intelligence in Rabat, in October, 2024. The success of the event is a testament to the collaborative spirit between the Technical Secretariat and States Parties. My delegation believes that the Conference has laid the foundation on guidance for future ideation between major stakeholders in government, the chemical industry, and the scientific community on the subject matter of AI.

Nigeria attaches great importance to the recruitment of experienced staff with the requisite skills and expertise at the OPCW. This is why my delegation will continue to support the Decision reached during the 28th Conference of States Parties on Tenure Policy. We believe that the swift implementation of the Decision would engender inclusivity and finally, put to rest, the agitation over the question of marginalization with respect to staff complement at the Technical Secretariat.

Mr. Chairman

In conclusion, the existing practice of compelling States Parties to vote for the maximum number of candidates in filling vacancies assigned to a relevant Group or risking the fate of their ballots being declared invalid is not prescribed in the Convention, the Rules of Procedure of the CSP or any other law. Invariably, the practice is a blatant aberration and an egregious breach of the letter and spirit of Rule 85, read with other Rules of the CSP and relevant Articles of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Nigeria is convinced of the notorious fact that this Conference is willingly able to reject the subsisting whimsical practice that deprived all States Parties of the sovereign right of decision making in accordance with the CWC and the CSP Rules of Procedure.

Further convinced, Chair and Conference, that the current practice as meticulously articulated in the Non-paper circulated by the Africa Group is an arbitrary imposition, Nigeria takes this opportunity to invite Conference to make a cease and desist, a thus-far-and-no-more declaration on the insidious practice.

I thank you.

My delegation requests that this Statement be circulated as an official document and posted on the External Server as official statement for the Session.