



REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

STATEMENT

BY

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AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE OPCW**

AT THE

**24TH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES TO THE
CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION OF THE OPCW**

25TH NOVEMBER 2019

THE HAGUE, THE NETHERLANDS



- **Mr. Chairperson;**
- **Excellencies;**
- **Distinguished delegates.**

1. I wish to begin by welcome H.E. Mr. Krassimir KOSTOV, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Bulgaria as Chairperson of the Twenty-Fourth Session of the Conference of States Parties. I also thank and commend H.E. Mr. Yun-Young LEE of the Republic of Korea for his able leadership of the Twenty-Third Session.

Mr. Chairperson,

2. The presence of so many Representatives of States Parties to this Conference attests to the importance not only of the Convention but also of multilateralism. It is a reflection of the political will of Member States to work together. In this respect, Botswana associates itself with the statements made on behalf of the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement and on behalf of the Group of African States Parties.

3. Botswana reaffirms its commitment to contributing to one of the most indispensable causes of human life - the achievement of a vision of a world free of chemical weapons and the threat of their use; a world in which chemistry is used for peaceful purposes, progress and the prosperity of all.

4. The creation of the OPCW and entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention marked a milestone in the enhancement of international security and the strengthening of the rule of law. Despite considerable challenges, the Convention has remained one of the most successful

instruments of disarmament that completely prohibits an entire category of weapons of mass destruction under strict international control.

5. As a State Party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, Botswana considers its consistent participation in the work of the Organisation vitally important. Our determination to honour our obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention is unwavering. Botswana has taken the necessary measures to ensure that the provisions of the Convention are translated into our domestic legislation. This effectively renders the Convention fully enforceable in the Republic of Botswana.
6. Further to this, the National Authority, which is the Ministry of Defence, Justice and Security, has established the Chemical Weapons (Prohibition) Board. This is an inter-ministerial body comprising policymakers and experts from different fields who come together periodically to ensure that matters of the implementation of the Convention remain at the forefront of the national agenda.
7. Most recently, Botswana has established the Chemical, Biological, Nuclear and Radiological Weapons Management Authority, the CBNR. The mandate of the Authority is to assess and devise strategies on biological and radiological risks and threats, conduct risk awareness trainings and develop national intelligence capacities in this field.

Mr. Chairperson,

8. Botswana lends its full support to the Organisation's international cooperation programmes such as the Africa Programme, of which it has

been a beneficiary. This is an invaluable capacity building programme which is critical to enabling African States Parties to meet their obligations and effectively implement the Convention. The achievements of the Africa Programme in meeting the particular needs of African Member States are apparent across our countries, as we continue to strive for inclusive and sustainable development in a more peaceful and secure Africa. In this respect, I wish to confirm that Botswana is in full support of the draft Programme and Budget of the OPCW for the financial year 2020.

9. Developing the capacities of small developing countries like Botswana is of critical significance. Botswana neither possesses, produces nor develops chemical weapons. Nevertheless, we do not take for granted the far-reaching nature of the precarious and unpredictable threats emanating especially from non-state actors.
10. We see the work of the Convention and our role in achieving its goals as being paramount to maintaining peace, stability and the sovereignty of States. In this respect, we fully support the establishment of the Centre for Chemistry and Technology and welcome the potential benefits it will offer to all States Parties to the Convention.
11. We want to see the Organisation work consistently, effectively, credibly and transparently. We urge Member States to preserve the Convention's innate multilateral character and the equal application of the provisions of the Convention to all States Parties. There is an even greater and more urgent need right now for all States to recognize the

importance of the unity of purpose and action in eliminating these deadly weapons. We must strive to foster peaceful resolutions in conflict areas where the alleged use of chemical weapons continues to be of serious concern to the international community at large.

12. The complete eradication of chemical weapons is a collective calling for all. We must join hands in this frontier for international peace and security and give hope to the millions of the voiceless women, men and children who have fallen and continue to fall victim from their use. We strongly believe that even in the face of challenges, the OPCW is the only hope in this regard. We must work tirelessly to ensure that the Organisation can continue to fully and effectively execute its mandate under the provisions of the Convention.
13. We believe that where there are legitimate concerns and expectations, it is the responsibility of this Conference of States Parties to engage in constructive dialogue to iron out differences with a spirit of mutual respect and due consideration.
14. We are conscious of the need to maintain the integrity, fairness and democratic nature of multilateralism. Botswana stands ready to engage with States Parties to find lasting solutions in the interests of this body.
15. As always, the Botswana delegation looks forward to the rich and constructive debates that characterise our Conference of States Parties.

16. I wish to end with a request that this statement be considered an official document of this Conference and be published on the Organisation's website and external server.

17. I thank you for your attention.
