

**STATEMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA BY HER EXCELLENCY
TENENG MBA JAITEH, THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC
OF THE GAMBIA TO THE OPCW, AT THE 24TH CONFERENCE OF STATES
PARTIES TO THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION**

Mr. Chairperson,

Mr. Director General,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen

1. I wish to join other States Parties in expressing gratitude to the Chairperson of the 23rd Session of the Conference of the States Parties, Ambassador Yun-Young Lee of the Republic of South Korea for his remarkable efforts, commitment and leadership as Chairperson.
2. I wish to also welcome Ambassador Krassimir Kostov of the Republic of Bulgaria as the chairperson of the 24th Session of the Conference of States Parties and assure him of the support of my delegation to lead the our deliberations towards a successful conclusion.
3. The Gambia fully associates itself to the statement delivered on behalf of the Africa Group of States to the Chemical Weapons Convention by H.E. Mr Kamal Bashir Ahmed Mohamed Khair, Ambassador of the Republic of the Sudan.
4. The Gambia also fully associates itself to the statement delivered on behalf of the members of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the

Chemical Weapons Convention and China by His Excellency Mr. Jafar Huseynzada, Acting Director of the Department for Political-Military Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

5. We take note of the statement delivered by the Director General, His Excellency Fernando Arias, and recognise his commitment and that of the entire Technical Secretariat of the OPCW in steering the activities of our organisation and their dedication to the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.
6. The Gambia reiterates the significance of attaining universality for the Chemical Weapons Convention and encourages States that are not signatories or have not ratified the convention to accede to it without preconditions.
7. Mr. Chairperson, while we continue to call for Universality of the convention, it is also worrying that States Parties that have acceded to the convention and active in its activities continue to maintain their chemical weapon production facilities, harbour their declared chemical stockpiles and fail to adhere to deadlines for destruction thereby posing a threat to global security.
8. It is evident that International Cooperation in the field of chemical activities is on the decline and this also continues to pose a threat to the global community, especially civilian populations.
9. Therefore, the resurgence of use of chemical weapons in civilian occupied areas is a worrying reality and The Gambia remains committed to efforts geared towards a World free of chemical weapons. We condemn the use of chemical weapons anywhere, any time and under any circumstances. We instead encourage the peaceful use of chemistry, and science in general, for the promotion of the common good of humanity.

10. Mr. Chairperson, States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention should endeavour to renew their commitments to demilitarise chemicals, their non-proliferation and non-production as well as stand together against those who use chemicals as weapons. This conference should be an opportunity to renew trust and build confidence between States Parties by reaching decisions through consensus in the interest of steering the organisation towards a common goal by ensuring a full and effective implementation of all aspects of the Convention.
11. We are grateful for the support provided to the Africa Programme and hereby extend our appreciation to all the countries that have rendered political, financial and technical support for the implementation of such an important program.
12. Mr. Chairperson, I kindly request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Twenty-fourth Conference of States Parties of the Chemical Weapons Convention.