



STATEMENT DELIVERED ON BEHALF OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA ON
THE OCCASION OF THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE TWENTY FOURTH SESSION
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES OF THE OPCW (CSP-24)
THE HAGUE, 25-29 NOVEMBER 2019

Chairperson,

Director General Fernando Arias,

Senior members of the Technical Secretariat,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates

1. Allow me on behalf of the South African delegation to take this opportunity to welcome Ambassador Krassimir Kostov, the Permanent Representative of Bulgaria, as Chairperson of the Twenty-Fourth Session of the Conference of State Parties. Your leadership and guidance will be central for the attainment of the objectives of the meeting and to ensure a successful outcome thereof. In this regard, let me assure you of my delegate's full support and collaboration. I also want to acknowledge the Chairperson of the Twenty-Third session of the Conference of States Parties, Ambassador Yun-young Lee of the Republic of Korea for his excellent conduct of the Twenty-Third Session.

2. My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the African Group by His Excellency Ambassador Kamal Bashir Ahmed, Permanent Representative of The Sudan, as well as the statement delivered on behalf of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention that are Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement and China, by His Excellency, Mr Jafar Huseynzada, Acting Director of the Department for Political –Military Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan.
3. My delegation has taken note of the comprehensive report of the Director- General on the activities of the organisation, and would like to express its gratitude to the Director-General, HE Ambassador Fernando Arias and the Technical Secretariat on their dedication and efforts in the implementation of the CWC in working towards the attainment of the mandate of the organisation of ensuring the destruction of all chemical weapons with a view to eliminating their threat to international peace and security, we welcome further progress achieved in this regard.
4. South Africa supports the efforts of the organisation to continue to provide comprehensive reports on issues such as the “Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme” and the “the Activities of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria”. We are likewise glad that the technical issues regarding the Programme and Budget of the OPCW for 2020 has taken into account the organisation’s practice of zero based budgeting. South Africa can therefore support the proposal for the adoption of an omnibus budget to fund the programmes and activities of the OPCW for 2020, as submitted by the 92nd Session of the Executive Council (EC-92) and the proposal for the transition of the OPCW’s budget to a biennial programme and budget cycle, with the first biennial programme and budget covering the period 2022 to 2023.

Chairperson,

5. As we have often stated before, Weapons of Mass Destruction pose a threat to all people of the world. South Africa therefore opposes any use of chemical weapons and is fully committed to its international obligations as a State Party to the Chemical Weapons Convention. We call upon the States that are not part of the Convention to join as soon as possible, as we all have collective responsibility to have a safe world, free of chemical weapons. The use of chemical weapons anywhere, by anyone and in any circumstances, undermines the international norm against the production, use and stockpiling of chemical weapons established under the CWC.
6. South Africa is supportive of the proposals made for technical changes to Schedule 1 of the Annex of Chemicals to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) made by Canada, the Netherlands, and the United States, as well as the amended proposal by Russia, as they both meet the criteria under the Convention. South Africa believes that the proposed technical changes are a positive contribution towards the strengthening of the Convention.
7. South Africa underlines the importance of the full implementation of Article XI and its provisions in order to strengthen and accelerate the economic and technological development of States Parties especially in the developing world. In the context of the implementation of Article VII, South Africa encourages States Parties and the Technical Secretariat to continue providing appropriate, tailor-made assistance and technical support to States Parties in enhancing their national capacities and in carrying out their national implementation measures.

Chairperson,

8. As you know, currently there is no OPCW Designated Lab in our continent (Africa); South Africa is determined to have an OPCW Designated Laboratory that will be able to perform off-site analysis of chemical samples collected by OPCW inspectors from chemical production facilities, storage depots and other installations, or from the site of an alleged use of chemical weapons. On 30

November 2018, Protechnik Laboratories signed a preliminary MoU with a Dutch laboratory TNO establishing a laboratory twinning agreement with the purpose to improve Protechnik's performance in the OPCW Proficiency Testing, in view of achieving OPCW designated status. Therefore, South Africa is committed to engage in partnership with other Governments, the private sector and civil society in order to effectively implement the Convention.

9. South Africa welcomes the project to upgrade the current OPCW Laboratory to an OPCW Centre for Chemistry and Technology to strengthen science and technology capabilities of the OPCW in responding to the threat of chemical weapons, as well as to support capacity building in the States Parties.
10. We welcome the developments on the Secretariat's new Electronic Declaration Information System (EDIS). South Africa is a user of the existing EDNA and is looking forward to implementing the new system when available. We urge an expansion of efforts by the Secretariat to ensure that declarations by States Parties are made in an efficient, confidential and timely manner.
11. We call upon the Organisation to have personnel that is equitable and has geographical and gender representation in accordance with Article VIII of the Convention.
12. South Africa, welcome all initiatives regarding strengthening cooperation with African States Parties. South Africa commends the achievements accomplished under the fourth phase of the Africa Programme and looks forward to the continuation of these efforts under the fifth phase of the Africa Programme commencing in 2020. Furthermore, for effectiveness and relevance of the Programme, South Africa welcomes the streamlined result based approach that the Secretariat has established. In this regard, South Africa further underlines the importance of sustaining and funding this Programme under the regular budget allocation. We further encourage the Technical Secretariat to prioritise the strengthening of relevant regional cooperation mechanisms and bodies to improve

coordination and synergy, through the African Union and its regional bodies, with the aim to enhance domestication of the CWC in the Region. We believe that various capacity building exercises will be carried out by the Secretariat.

13. South Africa hopes that this year the Conference returns to the culture of consensus that used to characterize the organization in the past. My delegation would therefore like to reiterate the call on all States Parties to strive towards attainment of consensus in the work of this organisation. We stress the imperative for good-faith dialogue and cooperation among all states parties. It is only under such atmosphere that the noble goals of the Convention will be fully attained.

In conclusion, Chairperson,

14. In honoring the memory of our late President, Nelson Mandela and his decade of Peace, South Africa joins the international world in calls for redoubling efforts to pursue international peace and security, development and human rights. Multilateralism and the rule of international law remains the cornerstone our foreign policy. South Africa will therefore continue to play an active role in all aspects of disarmament, Non-Proliferation and arms control while actively promoting and supporting the Non-Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, whilst at the same time holding States Parties accountable for any non-compliance with their obligations, based on irrefutable evidence.

Chairperson,

15. In closing I would like to request that this statement be regarded as an official statement of this Meeting.

I thank you.