



**ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION
OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS**

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**OPENING REMARKS BY
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(ICA)**

**AT THE
TENTH REGIONAL MEETING OF NATIONAL AUTHORITIES
OF STATES PARTIES IN AFRICA**

**AFRICA UNION HEADQUARTERS
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
22 – 24 MAY 2012**

Honourable Tadesse Haile, *State Minister for Industry and Chairman of the National Authority of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia*

H.E. the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps

Distinguished Permanent Representatives

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests, Dear Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen

1. On behalf of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons I warmly welcome you all to this Tenth Regional Meeting of National Authorities in Africa and I also thank the African Union Commission for hosting this important meeting. We are most grateful for the excellent arrangements and hospitality which we have received since our arrival here in Addis Ababa, Africa's political capital.
2. I also thank you Honourable Tadesse Haile, State Minister for Industry and Chairman of the National Authority of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, for taking time off your busy schedule to join us today. I further acknowledge the presence of the Permanent Representatives and members of the diplomatic corps present here this morning and also thank our participants who have travelled from all over the continent to attend this meeting.
3. We warmly welcome the Republic of Cape Verde which is participating for the first time. We hope you find this meeting useful in paving the way forward towards your formal designation or establishment of country's National Authority and its focal point. It is crucial for the implementation of the Convention that there is a specific contact point in each Member State who will take the relevant provisions forward. We also look forward to participants from Cape Verde taking an active part, in the near future, in activities organised by the Secretariat.

Ladies and Gentlemen

4. Regional meetings organised for National Authorities like the one we have here today were designed by the Technical Secretariat (TS) of the OPCW to provide, annually, a forum for National Authorities to confer and share experiences with one another and also with the staff of the TS.

These meetings have now become an important medium for States Parties in the region to present their needs for assistance in relation to their pending obligations and for them to indicate what assistance they can offer to other States Parties in the region. They also provide an ideal platform for States Parties to confer with the Technical Secretariat staff in identifying what further steps, if any, each State Party needs to take in order to implement its pending obligations under the Convention while also enabling the Secretariat determine how it may enhance the assistance it provides to States Parties in the region.

5. Since the first meeting, which was held in Khartoum in 2003 and which was attended by twenty five (25) sponsored participants, the Africa regional meetings have grown in importance and size to become an integral part of the yearly calendars of both National Authorities and the Technical Secretariat given their usefulness. As their usefulness gained ground so have States Parties' interests in these meetings and as a result the Secretariat currently sponsors annually two thirds of the National Authorities in the continent to enable them participate in annual meetings. The presence of forty eight (48) participants from forty one (41) National Authorities at this year's meeting illustrates this point and bears testimony to the importance African National Authorities attach to this meeting.
6. Over the last few years many African States Parties have witnessed a revival of their efforts as well as a new commitment to ensuring the speedy adoption of their national implementation legislation and other obligations. This has been spurred in part by the increased outreach activities conducted under the auspices of the OPCW's Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa on the CWC, which was instituted in 2007 to respond to the region's particular needs. Under the auspices of the Programme the Secretariat provides additional technical support to Africa, most of which is made possible by voluntary contributions.
7. Another commendable development in recent years is the sharp rise in the number of participants from the region who take part in the training and capacity building activities organised by the OPCW. A number of National Authorities are also undertaking domestic outreach at their own initiative. These have resulted in the strengthening of the capacities of the National Authorities towards taking full control of all national implementation efforts. In addressing current challenges the Secretariat continues, among others, to work closely with National Authorities to find sustainable solutions where neither the facilities provided by the Secretariat nor established practices are able to offer remedies.

Ladies and Gentlemen

8. While the majority of African States Parties continue to make commendable progress in the efficient functioning of their National Authorities a look at the pace of the implementation is not as reassuring. Currently out of the 50 African States Parties 22 have informed the OPCW that they have adopted legislative or administrative measures to implement the Convention. Another eleven (11) have national implementing legislation in place. Eight States Parties meanwhile have neither made an Article VII (5) submission nor indicated that they have commenced drafting implementing legislation. These are clear indicators that a lot remains to be done to ensure that the continent is secure from the risk that chemical weapons and the threats that its re-emergence, pose.
9. We recognise the challenges that governments and National Authorities in Africa face but in order for the CWC to be effective it is incumbent upon all States Parties to implement fully its provisions. Only in this way can we ensure that there is an international deterrent to the use of chemical weapons and that transfers of chemicals do not serve prohibited purposes but create a conducive environment for the peaceful use of chemistry to prosper, and thus enhancing the role of chemistry to the economic growth of the continent.
10. As we deliberate over the next three days on how best regional and sub-regional institutions on the continent can support governments and National Authorities to realise, at the earliest, all relevant obligations under the Convention. I would like to urge all participants to contribute to the recommendations that will be put forth at the end of this meeting by taking an active part in all deliberations.
11. I also urge all participants to use the opportunity provided by this meeting to identify interventions which will redress the bottlenecks impeding their work. Here in the political capital of Africa and at this historic institution where all our governments are engaged in promoting cooperation and fostering integration, we have the perfect opportunity to tap into the structures, resources, knowledge, skills and experience of the African Union and its subregional institutions to support the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). The resource persons from the African Union and its Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and regional mechanisms (RMs), which are all represented here, as well as the staff of the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW are all at your disposal over the next three days. Please make the

best use of them. The Secretariat stands ready to facilitate new forms of assistance where relevant to ensure that National Authorities in the region realise their obligations in full without undue further delays. One such new initiative is the National Authority Mentorship Programme which the Secretariat is currently piloting.

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12. Currently Africa is home to half of the States that are not party to the Convention. I entreat the African Union and its affiliated institutions as well as all African States Parties, donors and collaborators to spare no effort to bring on board the remaining four States which are not Party to the Convention in Africa. African economies continue to expand with inflows of new capital and technologies for industrial enterprises, including the chemical industry. Consequently, the region's share of the trade in chemicals continues to increase significantly. As new industries are set up Member States will have an important role to monitor these activities to ensure that they are not mis-used for purposes prohibited by the Convention. It is only when all countries in Africa are party to the Convention that ensuring that chemical weapons and the threats posed by the spiralling trade in chemicals in the region, are contained.
13. In closing, let me thank all the National Authorities here represented, including the host country, for the work that you have done so far and for the support you continue to provide to the Secretariat. Let us all take back home with us a renewed sense of urgency and up the tempo of the work that needs to be done in each of our Member States to fully implement the Convention when we return. With your continued dedication I am optimistic that significant progress will be recorded in the coming months.

I thank you for your attention.