OPCW Director-General Calls for Adoption of National Implementing Legislation across Africa during Visit to Cameroon

THE HAGUE, Netherlands – 15 September 2017 – During his visit to Yaoundé, Cameroon from 12-14 September, the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), Ambassador Ahmet Üzümçü, was received by Prime Minister, H.E. Mr Philémon Yang, and met with the Minister of External Relations, H.E. Mr Lejeune Mbella Mbella. The Director-General was accompanied by H.E. Ms Odette Melono, Permanent Representative of Cameroon to the OPCW.

The Director-General briefed the country’s senior officials about the Organisation’s priority activities and OPCW’s efforts in Africa such as a range of capacity building and training opportunities for relevant authorities including civil defence organisations, first responders and chemical laboratories.

Prime Minster Yang and Minister Mbella Mbella emphasised Cameroon’s continued commitment to the goals of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and their support for the OPCW.

Minister Mbella Mbella hosted a working lunch in honour of the Director-General that was attended by the Minister of State in charge of Justice, H.E. Mr Laurent Esso; the Minister in charge of Defence at the Presidency of the Republic, H.E. Mr Joseph Beti Assomo; the Minister of Finance, H.E. Mr Alamine Ousmane Mey; and the Minister Delegate in charge of Islamic Cooperation, H.E. Mr Adoum Gargoum.
The Director-General addressed the Stakeholders Forum for State Parties in Africa on Adoption of National Implementing Legislation Related to the CWC, and described the many accomplishments of the OPCW as it marked the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the CWC and the founding of the OPCW.

“Today, the Convention remains the cornerstone of the international community’s commitment to eliminating the scourge of chemical weapons,” he highlighted, noting the importance of CWC’s full implementation, including embedding the Convention’s provisions into domestic law.

The Director-General underlined that such full CWC implementation could serve as a potent weapon against terrorism, which increasingly impacts the security of the continent: “Africa is no stranger to terrorism and the destruction that it can inflict. Violent extremist groups – such as Boko Haram – that respect no borders present dangers to the whole region. As the chemical industry in Africa increases in scale and sophistication, the potential for non-state actors to gain access to toxic chemicals grows increasingly real.”

In his speech at a conference focused on "The Chemical Weapons Convention: Implementation and Considerations for Africa" held at the International Relations Institute (IRIC) of Cameroon, the Director-General invited the participants to “think innovatively” about how Africa can respond to the real dangers posed by chemical weapons and how to ensure that chemistry is used for peaceful purposes.

“In a region that is filled with so much evident potential, your ideas will help guide the future course of events and ensure enduring security in a chemical weapon-free Africa,” he expressed.

During his visit in Yaoundé, Ambassador Üzümcü also met with
Director of IRIC, Mr Salomon Eheth, was interviewed on *Cameroon Television* and held a press conference with local media representatives.

**Background**

Having ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention in 1997, Cameroon is one of the earliest countries on the African continent to join the treaty. Cameroon has been a staunch supporter of the Convention ever since, and the country supported and sent representatives to a large number of capacity building activities organised by the OPCW. Cameroon adopted its national implementation legislation in 2016.

As the implementing body for the Chemical Weapons Convention, the OPCW oversees the global endeavour to permanently eliminate chemical weapons. Since the Convention’s entry into force in 1997 – with its 192 States Parties – it is the most successful disarmament treaty eliminating an entire class of weapons of mass destruction.

To date, 96 per cent of all chemical weapon stockpiles declared by possessor States have been destroyed under OPCW verification. For its extensive efforts in eliminating chemical weapons, the OPCW received the 2013 Nobel Prize for Peace.

**More Information**

- “The CWC, implementation and considerations for Africa” *International Relations Institute of Cameroon Yaoundé, Cameroon Speech by the Director-General Ahmet Üzümcü 13 September 2017*
- **Stakeholders Forum for States Parties in Africa on Adoption of national Implementing legislation Ahmet Üzümcü Opening remarks on day two Director-General of the OPCW 13 September 2017**
- **OPCW Fact Sheets**
U.S.-China mission rushes bomb-grade nuclear fuel out of Africa

Chinese and U.S. nuclear experts spent a decade plotting out the Ghana operation, sharing expertise and working at each other’s labs. “No question, we were able to collaborate very, very well on the MNSR conversion,” says Ernest Moniz, CEO of the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI), a think tank in Washington, D.C., and former secretary of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). The process strengthened a bond that is quietly developing between nuclear scientists in the United States and China. “It’s very important for building trust,” says Hui Zhang, a nuclear policy analyst at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard University.
Supporting Nuclear Non-Proliferation: Ghana Converts Research Reactor from HEU to LEU Fuel

Ghana has successfully completed the conversion of its only research reactor from the use of high enriched uranium (HEU) fuel to low enriched uranium (LEU) fuel, in an international project supported by the IAEA to help decrease the proliferation risks associated with HEU fuel.