

Statement by PGA Member Hon. Alma Yak, MP, Member of the Foreign Relations and International Cooperation Committee and Chair of the Bilateral Relations Sub-Committee of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly of South Sudan

Delivered on behalf of Hon. Alma Yak, MP by Mr. Peter Barcroft, Director, International Peace and Security Program, PGA

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Your Excellencies, Members of Parliament, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honored to make this Statement and to share with you all a short summary of the different initiatives that I have undertaken with respect to promoting accession by the Government of South Sudan to the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention, since last many of us met in the PGA Regional Workshop in Dar es Salaam in September 2018.

I regret very much that I cannot be with you on this occasion.

Please be assured, however, of my continuing, undiminished commitment to promoting accession to both these vital international treaties by my Government.

Since last September, and in my capacity as a Member of the Foreign Relations and International Cooperation Committee, and Chair of the Bilateral Relations Sub-Committee of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly of South Sudan, I have had some success in:

- Ensuring that the Biological Weapons Convention has now been placed on the Agenda of the Council of Ministers of the Government of South Sudan - a significant step forward - this was also helped by the participation of a Delegation from South Sudan in the Annual Meeting of the States Parties to the BWC in Geneva in December 2018, facilitated by PGA. I very much hope that a positive decision to accede to this Convention may be forthcoming in the near future.
- Ensuring that formal correspondence has been transmitted from the Parliament to the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, seeking the transmission of the Chemical Weapons Convention to the Parliament. In contrast to the BWC, the Council of Ministers of the Government already approved accession to the CWC nearly 2 years ago. This was also announced by the Government of South Sudan at the Annual Meeting of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in the Hague in December 2017. However the

process has somehow stalled and we are hopeful that the CWC, as a result of our efforts, will now be finally transmitted to the Parliament in the coming few months. Once there, and in my capacity as Chair of the Foreign Relations and International Cooperation Committee, I will endeavor to ensure it receives prompt and positive attention.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

The role of Women Parliamentarians in Preventing the Proliferation, not only of Small Arms and Light Weapons, but also Weapons of Mass Destruction is one that has not been as fully developed as it should have been.

In recent months and years, and largely on account of the efforts of Women Members of Parliament from PGA, I am glad to see that this unfortunate state of affairs is now changing.

All of humanity has a stake in ridding the world of such weapons. It stands to reason therefore, that all should be involved in the decision-making and initiative-taking leading to this reality.

I wish you well in the important deliberations of this Workshop and look forward to seeing you again, when next we meet.

Thank you.