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THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA TO
THE OPCW AT THE NINETY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
UNDER AGENDA ITEM 6(G)
ON ADDRESSING THE THREAT FROM CHEMICAL WEAPONS USE**

Mr Chairperson,

On the issue of chemical weapons, China's position has been consistent and clear. China stands strongly against the use of chemical weapons by any state, organisation or individual under any circumstance and for whatever purpose. With regard to the alleged use of chemical weapons, it should be investigated and addressed in a full, objective, and impartial manner, with facts being the basis and the Chemical Weapons Convention ("the Convention") the yardstick.

With respect to the decision on "Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use", China reiterates its principled position of opposing this decision. This delegation wishes to highlight the following four points.

Firstly, the establishment of the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) went beyond the mandate of the Convention. With the detailed and clear-cut provisions regarding the incidents of the alleged use of chemical weapons contained therein, the Convention prescribes that such mechanisms as "the investigation of the alleged use of chemical weapons" and "challenge inspection" can be fully utilised for investigation. In disregard of our tradition of consensus, some States adopted the highly disputable decision on "Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use" by means of forcing a vote, thus setting up the new mechanism of "attribution of the responsibility for the use of chemical weapons" that goes beyond the scope of the mandate of the Convention. This move served to undermine severely the authority and effectiveness of the Convention and badly exacerbated the division and confrontation among the States Parties, thus causing an extremely adverse impact.

Secondly, the working methodology of the IIT lacks transparency and does not embody the principles of impartiality, objectivity, and independence. In terms of evidence and materials, the IIT reports were produced by heeding the opinions of the so-called "external experts", giving credence to the samples provided by non-governmental organisations and interviewing the so-called "witnesses" in a third country. Thus, the authenticity and effectiveness of the evidence, as well as the objectivity and impartiality of the conclusion of the investigation could not be guaranteed. In terms of specific procedures, without conducting any on-site investigation, the IIT had no direct evidence and could not ensure a complete and closed chain of evidence, which breached the provisions of the Convention and its Verification Annex.



As for the staff composition, the members of the IIT are mainly from the Western countries, which does not reflect the principle of equitable geographical representation.

Thirdly, the verification by the Technical Secretariat (“the Secretariat”) should preserve its technical nature. The verification regime established by the Convention is restricted only to factual finding and evidence collection at the technical level. To determine any non-compliance with the Convention and attribute the responsibility to perpetrators are far beyond the scope of the technical mandate for the Secretariat. As a technical body, the Secretariat should strictly abide by the Convention and perform its own tasks by upholding the principles of impartiality, objectivity, and independence.

Fourthly, the issue of the Syrian chemical weapons must be resolved by returning to the framework of the Convention. All States Parties have the responsibility and obligation of upholding the authority and effectiveness of the Convention, and should support the OPCW in conducting a full, objective, and impartial investigation of the incidents of alleged use of chemical weapons in compliance with the provisions of the Convention and its Verification Annex, so as to reach conclusions that can stand the test of facts and history.

The Chinese delegation calls upon all parties once again to follow the principle of multilateralism, enhance dialogue and cooperation, reduce political confrontation, abandon the practice of easily resorting to a vote, and revert to the tradition of consensus, so as to address the issue of Syrian chemical weapons properly and create favourable conditions jointly for the OPCW to resume its normal work.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

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