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**JAPAN**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR HIDEHISA HORINOUCI  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JAPAN TO THE OPCW  
AT THE TWENTY-SIXTH SESSION  
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,  
Director-General,  
Distinguished delegates,

First of all, I would like to congratulate H.E. Ambassador Bård Ivar Svendsen of Norway on the assumption as Chairperson of the Twenty-Sixth Session of the Conference of the States Parties. I assure Ambassador Svendsen of the cooperation from the Japanese delegation, and I am confident that this session of the conference will be a success under his excellent leadership. At the same time, I would like to express my gratitude to the departing Chairperson, H.E. Ambassador José Antonio Zabalgaitia Trejo of Mexico, for his sincere dedication thus far.

Taking this opportunity, I would also like to express my appreciation to the Technical Secretariat (“the Secretariat”) for its daily activities amid the COVID-19 pandemic, which demonstrates vigorous impartiality and professionalism under the strong leadership of Director-General Fernando Arias. Considering his achievements, I am pleased to express that Japan supports H.E. Mr Fernando Arias on his reappointment as the Director-General for a second term.

Japan takes the position that any use of chemical weapons can never be tolerated under any circumstances. Perpetrators must be held accountable and the OPCW continuously needs to tackle issues related to the re-emergence of chemical weapons seriously. From this point of view, we would like to take up two current issues.

The conclusion of the second report of the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT), published in April, identifies the Syrian Arab Air Force as the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in Saraqib in February 2018. The report provides a comprehensive analysis of large amounts of data in an independent and impartial manner. The conclusion, therefore, should be taken seriously.

Japan continues to urge the Syrian Arab Republic to address all outstanding issues, which the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) identified, by rendering the fullest possible cooperation to the Secretariat including the issuance of visas for OPCW inspectors, and thereby to ensure accountability for the incidents in which the use of chemical weapons were confirmed with a view to complying with its legal obligations under the Convention by taking the decision entitled “Addressing the Possession and Use of Chemical Weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic” (C-25/DEC.9, dated 21 April 2021) seriously.



Similarly, Japan once again condemns the poisoning of the Russian national Mr Alexei Navalny with a chemical nerve-agent of the novichok group. Japan hopes that this incident will be promptly clarified. We will continue to work closely with the States Parties concerned.

The OPCW Draft Programme and Budget for 2022-2023 deals with extremely important issues, including the transition to a biennial programme and budget cycle, the proposal for upgrading the information communication technology (ICT) system, as well as the way forward for the OPCW's activities considering the completion of the United States of America's chemical weapons stockpiles destruction, and the start of the operation of the new Centre for Chemistry and Technology. Both of which we expect to take place in the second year of the biennial budget. We praise the efforts made by all the Secretariat staff involving the budget preparation, as well as the co-facilitators of the budget. Japan, which participated in the budget consultations, supports this Draft Programme and Budget for 2022–2023. At the same time, we would like to touch upon the following points for the future tasks.

Behind this budget proposal, we share the sense of crisis of the Secretariat over the significant decrease of its purchasing power caused by inflation, given the steady impact of the decade-long zero nominal growth approach. This draft budget proposed an increase in the States Parties' assessed contributions higher than the scenario of the zero real growth, which incorporates inflation rates. In view of the transient factors during 2022–2023, such as the intensive investment for upgrading ICT and for large scale events or ceremonies, Japan supports the draft budget this time. Having said this, Japan encourages the Secretariat to introduce some sort of sustainable financial discipline, including setting a ceiling on the possible future increase of the amount of total budget, which secures the predictability for the States Parties and provides an incentive for the Secretariat to pursue further efficiency and prioritisation, if the Secretariat envisages to increase the future budget amount in a sustained manner.

We anticipate complementary and catalytic effects among the activities of the relevant departments of the Secretariat so that further efficiency can be pursued. In terms of budget appropriation, further clarification—such as on exactly what complementary relationships among cross-departmental activities are financially built in without duplications—is needed in the budget document and during the budget consultation. We highly appreciate that the revision was made, and the amount was reduced wisely in the course of the budget consultation this time. However, the budget consultation period may be too short to consider and discuss the draft budget substantially. Taking into account other international organisations, there may be room for improvements in the future.

One of the factors that makes the OPCW gradually difficult to fully finance its activities, apart from the above-mentioned principle of zero nominal growth, is the impact on its financial situation caused by the arrears of assessed contribution by some States Parties for one or more years. No matter how much the allotted amount of the assessed contribution is increased, it cannot be called a complete and fair solution as long as there remains States Parties that are in arrears. Japan calls for the States Parties in arrears, especially those that are one or more years in arrears, to complete their payments in full at the earliest possible date. We expect that the Secretariat will take further initiative in the collection of the arrears.

Japan continues to undertake every effort for, and commits itself firmly to, the abandoned chemical weapon (ACW) destruction project in China under the Convention. In fact, Japan has achieved progress thus far, as Japan has collected approximately 90,000 items and completed the destruction of about 60,000 of them. Japan has already spent enormous resources,

amounting to approximately EUR 2.6 billion from Japan's own account, to responsibly cover the costs necessary for such destruction activities, which includes building, operating and managing the related infrastructure and facilities, as well as personnel costs. During the course of the destruction process, we have abided by the environmental and safety standards, and no incidents have ever occurred.

Due to the measures taken by the receiving country in response to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, we had been forced to postpone all the destruction activities of ACWs that were supposed to be conducted from April last year. Amidst these difficult circumstances, Japan has consulted closely with our Chinese counterparts with a view to minimising the impact of the pandemic on the destruction project, and thereby concretely prepared for the resumption of the destruction activities. We are pleased to announce that, as a result, destruction operations in Haerbaling were resumed on 8 May 2021. Currently, Japan keeps consulting and deliberating closely with our Chinese counterparts to resume all the destruction activities of ACWs.

Japan, as shown in the above, remains committed to continue to make every effort for completing the destruction of these ACWs. In order to ensure the transparency of the process and the actual status of this project, Japan will provide as much information as possible at occasions such as the Executive Council and the Conference of the States Parties sessions, as it has done so before. Japan highly appreciates each State Party's sustained understanding of, and respective support for, this project.

In order to maintain international peace and security, it is extremely important to address the issues of non-proliferation including that of sensitive toxic chemicals, as well as their manufacturing materials and techniques falling into the hands of non-State actors. In this regard, we reiterate our expectation that each State Party steadily implements such obligation in the Convention as national implementation, as well as request that the Secretariat provides continuous assistance in such areas by enhancing the results-based management.

At the same time, it is integral to close geographical loopholes through prompt and unconditional accession of the States not Party, namely North Korea, Egypt, Israel, and South Sudan, to the Convention. In this context, we attach importance to maintain the Secretariat's preparedness in fulfilling its mandate.

Finally, during the course of the ever-changing security environment and developments in science and technology, Japan hopes that the States Parties continue constructive discussions for strengthening the norm of the Convention in order to tackle the threat posed by the re-emergence and use of chemical weapons. Japan thereby continues to actively engage in the discussions on the proposals made by State Parties. In this regard, Japan encourages State Parties to join in supporting the draft decision on an "Understanding Regarding the Aerosolised Use of Central Nervous System-Acting Chemicals for Law Enforcement Purposes". I would like to end my statement by reiterating our firm commitment to the Convention.

I ask that this statement be designated an official document of the Twenty-Sixth Session of the Conference of the States Parties and posted on both the external server and the OPCW public website.