



OPCW

Executive Council

Ninety-Ninth Session

8 – 10 March 2022

EC-99/NAT.35

8 March 2022

ENGLISH only

JAPAN

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR HIDEHISA HORINOUCHI
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JAPAN TO THE OPCW
AT THE NINETY-NINTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Madam Chairperson,
Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,

First of all, I would like to congratulate Ambassador Dr Eniola Olaitan Ajayi of Nigeria on the assumption as Chairperson of this session of the Executive Council. In addition, let me express my gratitude to the acting Chairperson of the Council, Ambassador Gudrun Lingner of Germany as well. I would also like to express our gratitude to the Director-General, Ambassador Fernando Arias, for his opening statement.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine is an attempt to unilaterally change the status quo by force, shakes the foundation of the international order, which is a clear breach of international law and totally unacceptable. Japan strongly condemns Russia's acts of aggression. We reiterate that international law, including the United Nations Charter and the Chemical Weapons Convention ("the Convention"), must be observed.

Japan takes the position that the use of chemical weapons can never be tolerated, under any circumstances. Those responsible must be held accountable and the OPCW continuously needs to seriously tackle the issue of the re-emergence of chemical weapons.

Japan takes seriously the two reports of the Fact-Finding Mission in Syria published in January. These reports provide that there are reasonable grounds to believe that chemical weapons were used in two incidents in Syria.

Japan continues to urge Syria to address all outstanding issues by rendering the fullest possible cooperation to the Technical Secretariat, and thereby ensuring accountability for the incidents in which the use of chemical weapons was confirmed in order to have the measures, based on the decision adopted during the Twenty-Fifth Session of the Conference of the States Parties, lifted.

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.



Japan continues to undertake every effort for, and commits itself firmly to, the abandoned chemical weapons (ACW) destruction project in China. Japan, in fact, has collected approximately 90,000 items and completed the destruction of about 60,000 of them. Japan has already spent approximately EUR 2.6 billion from its own account.

Due to the measures taken by China in response to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, we had been forced to postpone all the destruction activities of ACW from April 2020 onwards. But it is our pleasure that destruction operations in Haerbaling were resumed in May 2021. Japan continues to stay in close communication with China, including on the topic of the resumption of all destruction operations, as well as on how the current destruction plan should progress, whose time frame will expire at the end of 2022.

We will provide updates of the destruction activities of ACW under agenda item 7(b).

It is important to ensure providing effective assistance to the efforts of the States Parties to address the key mandates of the Convention. For that purpose, Japan urges the Secretariat to consider a system which serves for more effective and efficient use of resources. This will be beneficial to future budget consultations.

I welcome the establishment of an open-ended working group for the preparation of the Fifth Review Conference. Japan will actively contribute to the discussions of the group so that the States Parties can collectively achieve an outcome. Japan expects all States Parties to stand together and remain unwavering in our commitment towards our collective goal.

Thank you.

--- 0 ---