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JAPAN

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

Mr Chairperson,
Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,

First of all, let me assure you, Chairperson of this session of the Conference of the States Parties, H.E. Ambassador Vusimuzi Philemon Madonsela of South Africa, of the full support from the Japanese delegation. I would also like to thank the Director-General for his statement.

Japan reiterates that any use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anyone under any circumstances is unacceptable and that those responsible must be held accountable.

Regarding the cases in which the Fact-Finding Mission reports concluded that there were reasonable grounds to believe that chemical weapons were used in Syria, I understand that the Technical Secretariat is working on the investigation in a professional and impartial manner. Japan looks forward to the next report where new findings will be presented.

Japan continues to urge Syria to ensure accountability by addressing all outstanding issues identified by the Declaration Assessment Team.

Regarding the poisoning of Mr Alexei Navalny, Japan urges the States Parties concerned, particularly Russia on whose territory the attack took place, to cooperate for prompt clarification of this case of chemical weapons use.

The possibility or threat of the use of chemical weapons in Ukraine is of grave concern. In this regard, Japan welcomes the Secretariat's efforts to closely monitor the situation in Ukraine and, in collaboration with the United Nations, to prepare to react in case of an incident involving chemical warfare agents or toxic industrial chemicals. This includes preparing for rapid protective measures and fact-finding in response to any cases of emergency.

Mr Chairperson, we understand that the OPCW Draft Revised Programme and Budget for 2023 is aimed at responding to the impact of the unforeseeable significant inflation and the security requirements. We support the revised draft of the budget, as it ensures the activities required for the OPCW to fulfil its mandate are without any change to the assessed contributions by utilising the 2020 cash surplus. However, it is not possible to predict how long the cash surplus



will continue to offset the increase of the budget. If, in the future, a decision to raise the assessed contributions would be made, it would result in an increase of arrears as well, unless the collection of outstanding payments would be properly addressed. It will not be easy to gain the understanding of those States Parties that have paid timely and in full on an increase of assessed contributions. We expect that the Secretariat will achieve significant progress in its initiative to collect the arrears.

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 has completed the destruction of about 63,000 of them. Japan has already spent approximately EUR 3.1 billion from its own account.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were forced to postpone all destruction activities of ACW from April 2020 onwards. However, in addition to the existing destruction facilities, the Haerbaling Large Chambers (HLCs) started their operation last October. Comparing to the current ‘controlled detonation chambers’, HLCs have about 12 times the destructive capabilities. The destruction operations in Harbin and the excavation and recovery operations at other sites have also been resumed.

The destruction plan beyond the year 2022 jointly submitted by Japan and China was considered and adopted at the 101st Session of the Executive Council. Japan has been making the best possible efforts for the steady implementation of the destruction plan while appreciating the appropriate cooperation with China.

Japan urges the Secretariat to continue to make efforts towards achieving the full universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We reiterate the importance of maintaining the readiness for the accession of States not Party, in particular those who may accede to the Chemical Weapons Convention as possessor States.

Mr Chairperson, amidst the ever-changing security environment and the developments in science and technology, it is imperative to jointly and effectively tackle the threat posed by the use of chemical weapons. In this respect, Japan continues to actively contribute to the Open-Ended Working Group for the Preparation of the Fifth Review Conference in our capacity as one of the Vice-Chairs, and hopefully as one of the Vice-Chairs of the Fifth Review Conference itself.