

JAPAN

Possible Ways for Prevention of Re-emergence of Chemical Weapons

I. Background

1. We welcome the 26-year anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter referred to as “the Convention”) and the establishment of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (hereinafter referred to as “the OPCW”). Japan expresses its commitments to further efforts and cooperation with the international community for preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons.
2. Over the last 26 years, the disarmament of chemical weapons has steadily progressed and the disposal of stockpile chemical weapons will be finished. The international community has continued its efforts for non-proliferation of weapons of mass destructions including chemical weapons through the implementation of global and regional arrangements and measures such as the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540. Japan especially welcomes the unequivocal commitment and the tireless efforts made by the chemical weapons possessor States for the destruction of their stockpiles. With the progress of the destruction of declared chemical weapons, States Parties should put their efforts towards the prevention of the re-emergence of chemical weapons.
3. In this regards, despite the progress on the destruction of chemical weapons, it is regrettable that we have witnessed the use of chemical weapons in recent years. This poses a serious threat to the credibility of the Convention and the use or re-emergence of chemical weapons has more than ever become a significant and urgent issue. Any use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anyone, under any circumstances is unacceptable and it is now an important task for the States Parties to consider the means to prevent further recurrence.
4. With this background, Japan is of the view that the followings efforts should be made for the prevention of the re-emergence of chemical weapons and all the States Parties should cooperate in these efforts for the realization of the objective and purpose of the Convention.

II. Universality

5. 193 States have joined the Convention since its entry into force in 1997, and it is an achievement that the Convention has reached universality. However, only by achieving the

full universality of the Convention can the world be assured all chemical weapon's arsenals have been declared and destroyed; therefore, it is of importance to bring States not Party within the framework of the Convention. Since the Fourth Review Conference, no new States have joined the Convention. The efforts for the universality of the Convention made by the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter referred to as "the Secretariat"), should be commended. Efforts to induce the remaining States not Parties to accede to the Convention should be continued to prevent further proliferation of chemical weapons.

III. Enhancing National Implementation

6. Effective implementation of the Convention for preventing the re-emergence and use of chemical weapons by States and non-state actors requires full national implementation by all States Parties. States Parties whose national implementation is not sufficient might create loopholes for the proliferation of materials and technologies related to chemical weapons, and be targeted as a hub of malicious activities by the states of concern or non-state actors. The strict national implementation is a safeguard that the sensitive scheduled chemicals are not converted into chemical weapons by its organizations of concern within its territory or in the countries of destination of re-exportation. If the national implementation measures are legislated in the developing states, those states would acquire the confidence among trade and investment partners, and thereby it contributes to the further economic growth in the developing states. In short, we should raise awareness that the reinforcement of a trustworthy national implementation system not only ensures the prevention of the re-emergence and non-use of chemical weapons, but is also a wise investment in further economic development in the future.
7. To assist developing states in implementing national measures, technical assistance such as providing knowledge and experiences by other States Parties and the Secretariat to the States Parties being in need of support, continues to play a key role. In providing assistance, a tailor-made approach should be considered to take into account the circumstances of each country and region.

IV. Capacity Building

8. National implementation of the Convention is closely related to national capacity building and skills development, particularly in the area of the Article VI verification regime. In this regard, capacity building of personnel in charge of submitting declarations, receiving

inspections and escorting an inspection team should be given priority for assistance. At the same time, as the international transfer of chemical materials is on the increase, assistance for strengthening trade control through capacity building is becoming increasingly important.

V. Optimization of Verification

9. As one of the missions of the OPCW, namely the destruction of declared chemical weapons stockpiles, will complete this year, the verification system will play a more important role than ever to prevent the re-emergence of chemical weapons and confidence building among States Parties. Japan believes that States Parties and the Secretariat should make every possible effort to improve the industry verification with a view to achieving maximum results with minimum costs, taking into account scientific and technological developments in the chemical industry and the changing geographical distribution of chemical production sites. In this regard, the continuous discussion on the inspection mechanism including site selection methodology, enhancement of declarations and the allocation of resources for inspections should be commended. To this end, States Parties should be encouraged to submit comprehensive and accurate declarations and the Secretariat's further effort to increase the initial declaration of the facilities should be continued.
10. On the other hand, the principle of Article VI needs to be kept in mind in that verification activities have to be implemented without imposing excessive burden to the industry. To improve the verification activities, interaction with the industry continues to be beneficial from the viewpoint of sharing their experience amassed since the verification regime was established.

VI. Challenge Inspection

11. Challenge inspection is an indispensable mechanism for the Convention to remain capable of swiftly clarifying questions on non-compliance. This particular mechanism is growing in its importance after we have witnessed the use of chemical weapons in recent years. Challenge inspection works as a deterrent against non-compliance. For that deterrent to be effective, the OPCW, particularly the Executive Council and the Secretariat, must stand ready to consider and, when necessary, act upon a request for a challenge inspection at any time. In this regard, the Secretariat has the experience of investigations of the past uses of chemical weapons and should maintain the expertise for future inspections of alleged use of

chemical weapons.

VII. Mechanism of Identifying Perpetrators

12. The use of chemical weapons is a grave violation of the Convention nor permissible under any circumstances. States Parties should be united in condemning its actual use against citizens and once the perpetrators are identified, they must be held accountable. In this regard, Japan welcomes that the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) was established based on the decision of the Conference of States Parties titled Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use and that it released reports three times so far. Japan supports the work of the IIT.

VIII. Assistance and Protection

13. Japan is of the view that the assistance and protection forms a defense and deterrence against a chemical attack by letting the aggressor know that the damage of the attack will be minimized. The effective provision of assistance and protection in the case of emergency is growing in its importance and the OPCW must maintain and improve its readiness to respond, taking into account the possible use of chemical weapons. In order to coordinate experts with diverse nationalities and expertise and maximize the effect of assistance and protection, it is important to utilize the lessons learnt from the exercises for developing capacities. With the limited resources in mind, the experiences of the OPCW should be put to good use for more efficient implementation of the obligations under Article X. In this connection, it is useful to promote cooperation with relevant international organizations.

IX. Centre for Chemistry and Technology

14. Japan welcomes the opening of the Centre for Chemistry and Technology. The Centre should be a repository of expertise on the aforementioned issues and provide technical assistance to States Parties for the full and effective implementation of the Convention. At the same time, the Centre should enhance the verification capabilities of the Secretariat by training inspectors and the transfer of knowledge. Thereby, the Centre is expected to play a role to prevent the re-emergence of the use of chemical weapons.

X. Efficiency of the Structure and Management of the OPCW

15. To reinforce the efforts for the prevention of re-emergence of chemical weapons, it is

important to streamline the structure and management of the Secretariat, along with stringent financial conditions. It is important to make the most effective use of its personnel and financial resources in order to maximize the capacity of the OPCW. In this regard, Japan commends the OPCW for adopting a biennial budget, which is aiming at enhancing efficiency, longer-term strategic planning and predictability of resource requirement of the OPCW programs and projects. The OPCW has made efforts to improve its efficiency, such as the digitization of declarations, and we request further efforts in this direction. Possible negative consequences caused by the late payment of assessed contributions should be widely shared. It is highly recommended for all the States Parties, especially those that are two or more years in arrears, to regularize their payments at the earliest possible date.