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JAPAN

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AT THE SEVENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Madam Chairperson,
Distinguished delegates,
Director-General,

Let me begin by congratulating you, Ambassador Mukherjee, back to the Chair of the Executive Council. I am sure that, under your able leadership, this session of the Council will once again be successfully conducted. On behalf of the Japanese delegation, I assure you of the fullest support and cooperation.

Japan appreciates the intensive discussion in the Open-Ended Working Group for preparations of the Third Review Conference under the chair of Ambassador Baghli.

Considering that the OPCW is in its transition period, Japan expects that the forthcoming Review Conference will adopt a report which would indicate a future direction of the Organisation. Taking this opportunity, I would like to highlight the several points, not all the points due to the limited time, to which Japan attaches importance.

Firstly, on the destruction of chemical weapons, Japan welcomes the efforts being made by the possessor States to destroy the chemical weapon stockpiles based on the relevant decision at the Sixteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties. The delegation of Japan expects that the decision will continue to be implemented, which will be vitally important for the objectives of the Convention.

Secondly, the remarks by Syria concerning the possible possession and use of chemical weapons remind the international community of the growing threats of chemical weapons by States not Party as well as non-State actors. Japan is of the view that the universality of the Convention is of vital importance and more efforts are required in this area.

Thirdly, Japan is of the view that the prevention of re-emergence of chemical weapons is ever more important. The verification system has played a significant role to prevent the re-emergence of chemical weapons and for confidence building among States Parties. In this regard, it is indispensable for all States Parties to make complete declarations under Article VI in a timely manner. In order for the verification system to function effectively, I



encourage those States Parties that have not implemented a national system for industry declaration to do so as soon as possible.

In order to maintain and strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of the verification system, the rapid advances of science and technology, which may change the nature of chemical industry and affect verification measures, should be taken into account. In this regard, the knowledge of the Science Advisory Board should be used more proactively and the relationship between the OPCW and chemical industries should be strengthened.

Finally, regarding future priorities of the OPCW, the Secretariat ought to play various roles more than ever for the prevention of re-emergence of chemical weapons. It is also necessary to enhance expertise and readiness of the Secretariat for challenge inspections and investigations of alleged use of chemical weapons. To reinforce such efforts, with the limited resources in mind, the OPCW needs to strive for a more compact, flexible and efficient organisation while maintaining the necessary functions.

Japan is committed to making its fullest possible efforts to destroy abandoned chemical weapons (ACWs) in China based on the decision at the Sixty-Seventh Session of the Executive Council.

Japan has invested enormous resources to move the projects forward. The ACW destruction projects, which entail various challenges and uncertainties, have achieved significant progress. Especially, the launch of the excavation and recovery operations in Haerbaling and the commencement of the destruction operation in Shijiazhuang in northern China have marked important milestones in the projects. The details of the progress will be reported in the related agenda of this session.

The progress has been made by dint of the cooperation established on-site between Japan and China. Japan emphasises that the unprecedented and extremely challenging projects cannot be carried out without close coordination and cooperation between Japan and China. In this respect, Japan reaffirms its commitment to continue its fullest possible efforts to move the projects forward with the appropriate cooperation of China.

To conclude, I would like to assure you, Madam Chairperson, once again of the fullest support of the delegation of Japan to a successful conduct of the Council. I would also like to request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Seventy-First Session of the Council.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

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