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REPUBLIC OF KOREA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR JONGHYUN CHOE
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA TO THE OPCW
AT THE SEVENTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairman,

I would like to begin by offering the sincere congratulations of my delegation on your assumption of the chairmanship. I have every confidence that under your able leadership this meeting will indeed be guided to a successful outcome. I would like to take this chance to reaffirm that my delegation stands ready to render its full support to you during your term in office. My thanks go also of course to the outgoing Chair, Ambassador Alvaro Moerzinger, for all his hard work and prominent leadership during his chairmanship of this Council. Furthermore, I would like to express my appreciation to Director-General Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü for his comprehensive, informative and guiding report this morning. I would also like to wish the outgoing Deputy Director-General Ambassador Grace Asirwatham all the best in her future endeavours.

My delegation notes with appreciation that progress has been made with respect to the 12 chemical weapons production facilities in the Syrian Arab Republic. However, severe security conditions are still faced, preventing the Secretariat from achieving full destruction of the facilities and establishing a reliable monitoring system. I call upon all parties concerned to render their full support for this important task.

I understand that the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission has been dispatched to Syria again this year to conduct interviews and collect information and evidence. In this regard, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of the United Nations expressed his deep concern over allegations of use of toxic chemicals as weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. My country shares his concern and reiterates its support for the work of the Fact-Finding Mission, which, we believe, should ultimately lead to the establishment of a competent mechanism to bring those responsible to justice.

In its nine mission trips to Syria, the Declaration Assessment Team has conducted interviews, site visits and technical discussions with the Syrian authorities, and collected samples for laboratory analysis. I deeply commend the Team's dedication and professionalism in seeking to establish the whole truth of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. My delegation welcomes with appreciation the Mission's fifth status report and fully supports the work of the Mission in Syria.



Aside from its mandate of ensuring the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, the OPCW needs to prepare itself with a mid- to long-term plan by prioritising its limited resources to address newly emerging challenges, such as the hostile use of toxic chemicals by non-State actors.

In this regard, my delegation supports the note by the Technical Secretariat. My delegation shares the viewpoint as stated in the note that enhanced cooperation such as sharing information and experience among States Parties as well as between national law enforcement agencies and relevant international organisations such as INTERPOL, will be of value in helping to prevent the use of chemical weapons or other toxic chemicals by non-State actors. My delegation is ready to engage in discussions with other delegations to come up with innovative and effective measures for this endeavour.

As the Advisory Body on Administrative and Financial Matters proposes the linkage between the mid- to long-term staffing plan of the OPCW to the elements of its strategic framework, my delegation believes that the Technical Secretariat should think about its strategic priorities before any reallocation of its limited resources. In this regard, my delegation believes that the prevention of the use of toxic chemicals as weapons by non-State actors should be one part of such strategic priorities.

Universal adherence to the Chemical Weapons Convention is an utmost priority. My delegation welcomes the efforts by those countries including Myanmar and Angola which are seeking to follow the necessary procedures to join the Convention and urges all those that have not yet joined the Convention, including North Korea, to do so without any delay or precondition.

In closing, I would like to request that this statement be included in the official documents of the Seventy-Ninth Session of the Executive Council. Thank you, Mr Chairman.

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