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JAPAN

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR MASARU TSUJI
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JAPAN TO THE OPCW AT THE
EIGHTIETH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairman,
Distinguished delegates,
Director-General,

First, I would like to express my appreciation to the Director-General for his useful report.

Let me begin by welcoming Ambassador Hamid Ali Rao to the office of Deputy Director-General of the OPCW. We look forward to working with you during the time awaiting future transition period of the OPCW.

Following the accession of Myanmar in July, I would also like to welcome Angola, which has completed its procedure to join us in the Convention. Japan appreciates the efforts by the States Parties and the Technical Secretariat to promote the universality of the Convention.

Let me start with issues related to the chemical weapons of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Japan continues to support the ongoing activities of the Fact-Finding Missions (FFM) under the leadership of the Director-General in order to find the facts concerning use of the chemical weapons in the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic, and we highly commend the work of the mission to date. In this regard, Japan supports the establishment of a contingency fund for special missions for contingency including the FFM and withholding the distribution of the cash surplus for 2013.

Regarding the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), we support the activities of the JIM under the auspices of the United Nations Security Council and the work of the FFM in the collaboration with the JIM. At the same time, in order to ensure accountability, we would like to stress that it is important for the Secretariat to continue to provide updated information in detail to States Parties.

Concerning other issues related to the chemical weapons of the Syrian Arab Republic, there remain unsolved problems. We saw certain progress on the destruction of chemical weapons production facilities (CWPF), but further efforts by the related parties for complete destruction are necessary. The initial declaration by the Syrian Arab Republic continues to give reason for concern, though we highly appreciate the efforts by the Declaration Assessment Team. We would like to reiterate that, in order to ensure full implementation of



the obligation to destroy all chemical weapons, any concerns and doubts regarding the accuracy and completeness of the initial declaration must be clearly and comprehensively addressed. We would, again, like to urge the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to double its efforts to sincerely fulfil the obligations of the Convention and fully cooperate with the Declaration Assessment Team.

Now I turn to new challenges to the international community concerning use of chemical weapons.

In the current international security environment, increased threats caused by use of chemical weapons by non-State actors, including terrorists, are ever becoming imminent. Recent information, submitted by the Government of Iraq before this session on the use of chemical weapons, gives us grave concern. It is of the highest importance to bring all the facts to light on the use of chemical weapons wherever it happens and by whomever. The Government of Japan strongly and categorically condemns use of chemical weapons.

In order to ensure that the OPCW continues to discharge its responsibility required under the Convention, it is important for the OPCW to stay ready to fulfil its function in addressing new challenges on use of chemical weapons by non-State actors.

In the retreat meeting of last Thursday, a lively discussion on the future strategy for the future role and function of the Organisation was held. We appreciate the initiative taken by the Director-General. Among various issues, many participants referred to new challenges to the OPCW including the threat of use of chemical weapons by non-State actors. It was a very useful opportunity for us through constructive and frank discussion to start engaging ourselves to develop possible directions for the future of the OPCW.

As for the future picture of the OPCW, it needs to strive for a “lean, strong and agile” organisation while the OPCW will be able to continue to fulfil its mandate on the core objectives of the Convention. In this evolving process, we encourage further discussion among States Parties in order to develop consensus among States Parties.

On the Programme and Budget of the OPCW for 2016, we appreciate the efforts by the Secretariat and facilitators. In order to maintain an effective and efficient budget within the limited resources of the OPCW, it is important to constantly review the priorities among the various programmes, while adapting to the evolving situation.

As the report of the Thirty-Ninth Session of the ABAF noted with concern about the potential impact on the financial situation of this Organisation by the non-payment of assessed annual contributions and reimbursements, the Council needs to closely monitor the status of payment. In order to ensure that the OPCW continues to stay relevant in years and decades to come, it is necessary to maintain a healthy and sustainable financial basis.

Last but not least, let me touch upon an important issue for Japan, the abandoned chemical weapons (ACWs).

The destruction of ACWs is one of the most important commitments, as explained many times, Japan has made under the Convention.

The Chairperson of the Council, the Director-General and the Council delegations visited the Haerbaling ACW site this June, the largest burial site of ACWs. Japan has been working to facilitate the process of destruction of ACWs with additional resources available, namely budget, personnel and facilities, with a view to completing the destruction of ACWs in Haerbaling within the year of 2022. It is of the utmost importance for Japan and China to make every effort to overcome technical challenges which could hinder prompt destruction of all ACWs in China. We appreciate the continuous support from the Council and reaffirm our commitment to exert the greatest possible effort for early and complete destruction of ACWs with the adequate cooperation of China.

In conclusion, I would like to request that this statement be circulated as an official document of this session of the Council.

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