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JAPAN

**STATEMENT BY MINISTER SETSUKO KAWAHARA
PERMANENT REPRESENTATION OF JAPAN TO THE OPCW
AT THE EIGHTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,
Director-General,
Distinguished ambassadors and delegates,

Let me begin by joining previous speakers in commending your able leadership as the Chair of the Executive Council. We are convinced that this session of the Council will produce substantial progress under your guidance.

Our government continues to pay great attention to the situation related to the chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

First, we appreciate the efforts by the parties concerned to complete the destruction of all chemical weapons declared by the Syrian Arab Republic. Regarding the chemical weapons production facilities (CWPF), we would like to request the continued effort for early completion of the destruction of all the CWPFs, despite the very volatile security situation.

Nevertheless, we regret that so many outstanding issues on the Syrian Arab Republic have not been resolved to date and need to be addressed at this session. The OPCW should continue to be seized of these issues with a view to clarifying them as soon as possible.

In particular, we are very much concerned about the initial declaration by the Syrian Arab Republic. There are so many unresolved issues which indicate discrepancies and lack of accuracy and completeness. It has become apparent, the more the assessment activities progress, the more doubts and questions come to the surface. It is a paradoxical and regrettable situation. Therefore, we would like to once again urge the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to redouble its efforts to sincerely fulfil the obligations of the Convention by fully cooperating with the Declaration Assessment Team.

I also wish to touch upon the issue of alleged use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Needless to say, use of chemical weapons by anyone cannot be allowed under any circumstances and by any reasons. Japan welcomes the commencement of the work of the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), and fully supports its activities and the



FFM's full cooperation with the JIM. We also urge all parties directly related to its activities including the Syrian Arab Republic, to strengthen cooperation with the Technical Secretariat for facilitating the work of the Mission. Those who are responsible for the use of chemicals as weapons should be identified and brought to justice.

Next, let me turn to the issue of the chemical weapons in Libya.

We appreciate the efforts which Libya has made to date to destroy its chemical weapons stockpile. We would like to commend the Technical Secretariat for its efforts to assist the Libyan Government in this regard.

We took full note of the request from Libya submitted to the Director-General under imminent threats posed by non-State actors. We must address this difficult challenge expeditiously with a sense of urgency. Responsibility and capability of the Organisation are being tested again.

When we consider possible options, it is of utmost importance to try to find out a feasible and innovative solution. We are of the view that security risk assessment is a crucial element to be considered, in addition to the efficiency.

I am convinced that the OPCW will be able to demonstrate its ability and responsibility once again by playing an important role in global efforts on disarmament and non-proliferation.

In the current international security environment, the increased threat caused by non-State actors, including terrorists, are ever becoming imminent. The current situation in Libya demonstrates that a threat by terrorists groups is a reality.

In this regard, we would like to reaffirm the importance of our efforts through the Sub-Working Group on non-State actors under the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism. Japan is ready to continue to contribute to the global efforts both inside and outside of the OPCW to tackle serious challenges caused by non-State actors.

In this connection, we would like to stress the crucial importance of enhancing the effectiveness of the Convention. From that perspective, strengthening national implementation measures is the key and the cornerstone for addressing these new challenges.

It is indispensable and mandatory for all States Parties to establish their national implementation system including, but not limited to, legislation that covers all initial measures. Moreover, in order to make the legislation really work, various efforts such as capacity building of personnel for National Authorities are essential.

Furthermore, we would like to recall the importance of efforts to ensure that the OPCW continues to discharge its responsibility under the Convention while adapting to an ever-changing international security environment. Taking this into consideration, we believe it is timely to facilitate our deliberations by establishing an Open-Ended Working Group on the Future Priority of the OPCW. We will continue to actively participate in this collective effort.

Last but not least, let me touch upon the issue of abandoned chemical weapons (ACWs).

The destruction of ACWs is the most important commitment Japan has made under the Convention. Japan has been making utmost efforts to destroy ACWs in China, by investing enormous resources, both financial and technical, in the ACW destruction projects.

From the viewpoint of promoting a good understanding of the Council on the ACW destruction projects and ensuring the transparency in these important projects, Japan continues to provide the Council with updates on the progress made in the ACW projects. My delegation will give a detailed briefing on the progress made under the relevant agenda at this session.

Let me stress that the progress of the ACW projects has been made with the valuable on-site cooperation between Japan and China. I would like to reiterate that, without the constructive cooperation and close coordination between Japan and China, these unprecedented difficult projects could not have been carried out. We reaffirm our sincere and firm commitment to exert the greatest possible effort on our part for the early and complete destruction of ACWs with the adequate cooperation of China.

Finally, Mr Chairperson, I would like to reassure you of our delegation's full support and cooperation to ensure the successful conduct of this session.

I thank you for your attention.

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