



OPCW

Executive Council

Eighty-First Session
15 – 18 and 23 March 2016

EC-81/NAT.35
15 March 2016
ENGLISH only

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

**STATEMENT BY MINISTER COUNSELLOR YEONJEAN YOON
ACTING PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA TO THE
OPCW AT THE EIGHTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,

I would like to begin by offering my confidence that under your able leadership this meeting will indeed be guided to a successful outcome and by rendering my delegation's full support to your endeavours for the successful outcome. I also would like to express my appreciation to Director-General Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü for his guiding report this morning.

My delegation reiterates its appreciation to the OPCW team for their devotion and hard work under dangerous conditions to make progress in destroying the Syrian Arab Republic's declared chemical weapons and its 12 chemical weapons production facilities. Despite this achievement, however, my delegation is deeply concerned over the findings of the Fact-Finding Mission that chemical weapons have continuously been used in the Syrian Arab Republic. It is regrettable that the FFM report last December concluded that there is a high degree of probability that some of those involved in an incident in Darayya on 15 February 2015 were exposed to sarin, or a sarin-like substance.

It is equally worrisome that the sample analysis result of the Declaration Assessment Team shows evidence of sulfur mustard and indicators of sarin, soman and VX. These alleged gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies in the Syrian declarations have deeply worried us. The Syrian Arab Republic has yet to provide us with confidence that the Syrian chemical weapons programme is irreversible.

Under these circumstances, my delegation deeply commends the FFM and DAT staffs' dedication and professionalism and reiterates its commitment to extend its full cooperation to ensure the safe and effective completion of their work. In this vein, I would like to inform the Council that the Republic of Korea has concluded the financial contribution agreement to the OPCW Trust Fund for Syria Missions.

My delegation supports the draft decision proposed by the US delegation and expresses its sincere hope that this Council session will adopt the decision by consensus.

Furthermore, my delegation welcomes the first report of the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism. I believe that its investigation will act as a deterrent to the use of chemical weapons by showing that those responsible for the use of toxic chemicals as weapons will be



identified and held accountable for these abhorrent acts in the end. My delegation reiterates its position that any perpetrators, organisers and sponsors responsible for the use of chemical weapons must be held accountable and all the States Parties should closely work together for this noble endeavour, including the Syrian Arab Republic.

In addition to the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, my delegation is gravely concerned over the possibility that terrorist groups in Libya could acquire the remaining chemical weapons. The destruction of its chemical weapons is Libya's responsibility, but we all know that due to the lack of technical capacity and the deteriorating security situation, the Libyan authorities would not be able to meet the destruction completion date without further international assistance. Therefore, my delegation supports the draft decision which will allow the Director-General to proceed to study and select the most cost-effective option for the destruction of the remaining Libyan Category 2 chemical weapons.

Considering this Libyan situation, I believe that the prevention of the hostile use of toxic chemicals as weapons by non-State actors, in particular terrorists, should be one of our priorities. In this regard, my delegation recognises with appreciation the note by the Director-General on the status of the OPCW's contribution to global anti-terrorism efforts and supports the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism and its sub-working group on non-State actors.

With the increasing threat posed by non-State actors and the dual nature of chemical agents, we have to strengthen chemical safety and security as well as physical protection of chemical facilities and tightening export control. In this sense, the Republic of Korea has hosted a workshop for Member States of the OPCW in the Asian region on the peaceful development and use of chemistry for five consecutive years. Last year, 35 experts from 21 Asian countries including Myanmar joined the Seoul workshop and shared the experience of the Republic of Korea to enhance the national capacities on chemical safety and security. I am delighted to announce that the Republic of Korea will continue its efforts to promote such activities through voluntary financial contribution this year.

The task of prohibiting any chemical weapon is one that knows no ends. I believe that the future task of the OPCW is making the Organisation more effective in fulfilling the core objective by addressing challenges in an ever-changing security environment and in the development of science and technology. It is high time for us now to frame a new chapter for the OPCW after 2023. In this regard, my delegation welcomes the establishment of an open-ended working group on the future of the OPCW to discuss and formulate recommendations on the future priorities of the OPCW, to be considered at the Review Conference in 2018. For its effective discussion, I am of the opinion that the working group should set a clear mandate and be inclusive to all the Member States.

Last but not least, I would like to reiterate that universal adherence to the Chemical Weapons Convention is an utmost priority for all of us. In this respect, my delegation urges the few remaining countries outside the Convention, including North Korea, to join the Convention as soon as possible without any precondition.

In particular, my delegation notes with concern that the recent nuclear tests and launches using ballistic missile technology conducted by North Korea pose a clear threat to the global non-proliferation regime. In order to change North Korea's flawed calculus by paying a high price for its provocation against the international community, the United Nations Security

Council unanimously adopted the resolution on North Korea with the strongest-ever sanctions. This historic Security Council resolution also reaffirms that North Korea must abandon all chemical weapons programmes, and accede to the Convention and immediately comply with its provisions. In this regard, I call upon the Secretariat to step up efforts to make North Korea abandon its chemical weapons programme and join the Convention.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

--- 0 ---