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REPUBLIC OF KOREA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR YUN-YOUNG LEE
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA TO THE OPCW
AT THE NINETIETH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Madam Chair,
Mr Director-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

Let me begin by expressing my full confidence that this session of the Executive Council (“the Council”) will indeed be guided to a successful outcome under the able leadership of Chairperson, Ambassador Jana Reinišová, as in previous sessions and meetings. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to Director-General Fernando Arias for his comprehensive report earlier this morning. Taking this opportunity, I wish to reiterate my delegation’s full support for the work of the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat (“the Secretariat”).

The remarkable achievements that we have collectively made since 1997 are being overshadowed by the recent re-emergence of chemical weapons uses around the world.

To ensure the relevance of the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”) at this critical juncture, there is a strong need to keep reshaping the Convention along with constantly evolving threats, including developments in science and technology. In this regard, my delegation welcomes the recent consensus reached at the Sixty-Second Council Meeting on the joint proposal by the US, Canada, and the Netherlands to add two families of chemicals to Schedule 1 of the Annex on Chemicals to the Convention. We hope that the proposed changes could enter into force as early as possible.

I would also like to express appreciation to the Russian Federation for making five proposals for a change to the Annex. Though we failed to reach a consensus on the proposals, we believe that consensus could be made in the future in a way that the Convention is further strengthened.

We note with serious concern the final report of the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) dated March 1 regarding the incident in Douma, Syria on April 7, 2018. The FFM confirmed in the report that its evaluation and analysis provide reasonable grounds that the use of a toxic chemical, which was likely molecular chlorine, took place in Douma. My delegation commends the work of the FFM, which was conducted in accordance with OPCW guidelines



as well as SOPs and work instructions. We reiterate our full confidence in the work of the FFM.

My delegation condemns in the strongest possible terms all uses of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anyone under any circumstances, including the Douma attacks. Regrettably, we now have one more confirmed case of chemical weapons use in Syria. Those responsible for such heinous attacks must be identified and held responsible. Impunity will only embolden perpetrators, leading to more provocations.

In this regard, we expect further investigations could take place in the near future by the newly created attribution mechanism mandated by the Decision of the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of States Parties last June. My delegation supports the work of the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) and asks all State Parties to render the fullest possible cooperation to the mechanism.

Also, we note the Director-General's report that the Secretariat is still unable to resolve all of the identified gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies in Syria's declaration, which brings grave concern to all of us. We urge the Syrian Arab Republic to render the fullest possible cooperation to the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) and to make utmost efforts to address these pressing outstanding issues.

The organisational governance of the OPCW, especially the issue of the tenure policy and other human resources issues, is another matter of interest to us all. As two external experts rightly pointed out in their report last June, the current tenure policy is no longer appropriate considering the demands inside and outside the Organisation. There is a room for improvement and an appropriate action needs to be taken. The Director-General should be equipped with more flexibility especially in such areas as verification, inspection, and the OPCW lab, where a high level of technical expertise and years of accumulated experience are essential.

In this regard, my delegation welcomes the Council Chairperson's proposal to set up a facilitation mechanism on this important issue. Indeed, this matter demands an immediate action during this Session of the Council. We would like to underline that the mechanism for facilitation, if launched, must consider geographical balance in the Secretariat as a core element of the future tenure policy of the OPCW.

The universalisation of the Convention is one of the top priorities for the OPCW. Yet there are still four States not Party to the Convention. My delegation strongly urges the four States to join the Convention as early as possible without any preconditions. We would also like to request that the Secretariat, in coordination with States Parties, continue to make efforts to achieve our shared goal, including a tailor-made approach for each State outside the Convention.

This year, the Republic of Korea plans to provide around 150,000 USD as a voluntary contribution to the OPCW. And, of this, 70,000 USD would be allocated to the OPCW lab upgrading project. We were the first State Party to make financial contributions to this important undertaking. My delegation is pleased to contribute once again to fostering OPCW with an increased technical capacity and capability – one which is therefore all the better equipped to fulfil the noble task which it is entrusted with. In this regard, it is our sincere hope that other States Parties could play a part in such efforts.

Last but not least, we would like to highlight the need to pay due regard to the importance of reflecting as wide a geographical scope as possible in recruiting staff as articulated in Article VIII of the Convention. In particular, my delegation requests that the Director-General accord special attention to the issue of under-representation of some States Parties in the Secretariat. We believe that comprehensive and tailor-made approaches are required to address the issue. The UN's Young Professionals Programme (YPP), which opens certain number of vacancies to only underrepresented or unrepresented countries could be a good reference.

In closing, I would like to request that this Statement be circulated as an official document of this Session of the Council and be published on the OPCW website and external server.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

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