

**The 91st Session of the Executive Council of the OPCW  
General Debate  
Statement by H.E. Ambassador Yun-young LEE  
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea**

**July 9, 2019, The Hague**

Mr. Chairperson,  
Mr. Director-General,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,

I wish first to offer the warmest welcome to the new Chairperson of the Executive Council, Ambassador Andrea Perugini of Italy. You are taking on a demanding task in guiding us through increasingly challenging times. With your expertise and ability, I have every confidence that we will make further strides forward under your able leadership and I assure you of my delegation's full support.

I would also like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Ambassador Jana Reinisova of the Czech Republic for her excellent chairpersonship. Her able leadership and friendship has been invaluable and is deeply appreciated. As her term in the Hague is coming to an end, I wish her every continued success on her path ahead.

I am also grateful to the Director-General Fernando Arias and the staff of the Technical Secretariat who have been working hard in a transparent, independent and impartial way. Their professionalism and devotion deserve to be commended.

Mr. Chairperson,

Around a year ago, the OPCW held the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of States Parties and adopted a monumental Decision which would help identify the perpetrators of Chemical Weapons use in the Syrian Arab Republic. Following a painstaking decision-making process, the CSP-23 succeeded in approving the 2019 Budget and Programme, which included the establishment of the Investigation and Identification Team, or the IIT. We welcome the completion of the recruitment process of IIT members and the initiation of its work. We look forward to future reports by the team, including the one on the incident in Douma in April 2018. All those responsible for such uses of toxic chemicals must be held accountable.

It is essential that the IIT members can indeed effectively fulfill its missions. In this regard, my delegation is deeply concerned about the DG's report that the members of the IIT were not able to obtain a visa and were denied access to the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic. We would like to reiterate the Article VII of the Convention, which stipulates that we the States Parties are obliged to provide necessary cooperation to the OPCW in the exercise of its functions. We would like to urge all relevant States Parties to extend maximum support for the work of the IIT.

We are also worried about the report that the Secretariat is still not able to resolve identified gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies in Syria's declaration. In particular, my delegation notes with concern the report on the DAT's visit to Syria in April, during which the Team newly identified the absence of remnants of destroyed production equipment and chemical munitions as well as the presence of several undestroyed cylinders. We urge the Syrian Arab Republic to provide the fullest possible cooperation to the DAT and to make utmost efforts to address the outstanding issues.

My delegation would like to express its deep appreciation for the valuable work of the Fact-Finding Mission, or the FFM. The FFM has been fulfilling its missions in a transparent, independent, and impartial

way to provide a professional report on each possible incident of use of chemical weapons. We commend the work of the FFM, including its report on the Douma incident, and reiterate our full confidence in its work.

Mr. Chairperson,

As we are increasingly faced with new and emerging challenges, the OPCW needs to keep pace with new developments in chemistry. In this regard, we share the concern that central nervous system (CNS)-acting chemicals could be potentially used as chemical weapons. My delegation supports the view that we need to launch discussions on potential risks of CNS-acting chemicals within the OPCW.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Technical Secretariat recently circulated a Non-Paper ‘Ensuring Diverse and Qualified Workforce of the Technical Secretariat.’ We share the concern of the TS that the current framework for workforce management has limitations, leading to a loss of productivity of over five million euros per year. Though details need to be worked out later, we welcome and support in general the proposals of the TS, particularly the suggestion that the DG should have greater flexibility in granting special contract extensions and in re-employing former staff members. My delegation also appreciates the work of the TS in enhancing geographical balance within the Secretariat but there is room for improvement in many ways. We would like to request the Secretariat to be more active in reaching out under-represented regional groups, especially the Asian Group.

We also note with appreciation the proposal of NAM and China on the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group. My delegation welcomes any initiatives to reactivate the dialogue among the States

Parties with a view to strengthening the CWC regime and implementing the Convention effectively.

Taking this opportunity, we would like to thank the two co-facilitators, Ambassador Puja and Ambassador Gomez, for their tireless and dedicated efforts to accomplish a demanding mandate. We hope that all States Parties will approach this matter in a constructive and pragmatic manner so that we can reach consensus and produce a tangible outcome at this Session of the Executive Council.

Mr. Chairperson,

Since the establishment of the OPCW in 1997, universal adherence to the Convention has been an utmost priority for the organization. Fully convinced that universality of the Convention is critical in ensuring full implementation of the Convention, my delegation urges the four remaining States not Party to the Convention to ratify or accede to it as soon as possible without any preconditions. We would also like to request that the Technical Secretariat exert further efforts to achieve our shared goal of universality at the earliest possible time.

My delegation is also convinced that the implementation of Article VII is prerequisite for the effective achieving of the goals of the Convention. While there has been steady progress in the implementation of Article VII, 37 States Parties have yet to report on the adoption of implementing legislation as of the end of 2018. We appreciate such ongoing efforts by the TS as the Mentorship/Partnership Programme and the Influential Visitors Programme and encourage the Secretariat to continue to render its support to those States Parties for the full implementation of Article VII.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Government of the Republic of Korea has recently made voluntary contributions amounting to a total of 150,000 US dollars for the future OPCW Centre for Chemistry and Technology and for the 2019 Seoul Workshop.

There is a compelling need for the OPCW to be well equipped to adapt itself to constantly evolving challenges. Against this backdrop, the project to upgrade the current laboratory is truly timely. We need it to keep pace with current threats as well as rapid advances in science and technology. In full recognition of this, the Korean Government made the decision to become the first State Party to provide voluntary contributions last year. And we are very pleased to continue our financial contributions again this year. It is our hope that other States Parties who have yet to make a financial or political commitment will also play their part to this noble end.

Contributing to strengthening international cooperation in the fields of chemical safety and security is another core part of our work. Indeed, the Republic of Korea has been hosting an annual regional workshop in Seoul. My government is now looking forward to hosting the 8th Workshop on the Peaceful Development and Use of Chemistry again this year. We trust that it will be a valuable opportunity to further strengthen capacity-building of Asian member states.

Mr. Chairperson,

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

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. /END/