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PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR XU HONG
HEAD OF THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATION
OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA TO THE OPCW
AT THE NINETY-FIRST SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairman,

Please allow me to begin by congratulating you, on behalf of the Chinese delegation, on your election as the Chairman of the Executive Council (“the Council”), and on your chairmanship at a session for the first time. The Chinese delegation believes that with your diplomatic experience and skills, you will certainly be able to improve the work and the atmosphere in the Council, reinforce the spirits of unity and consensus among the States Parties, and bring the deliberation of the agenda items at this session to a successful conclusion. This is also the first time that I attend a Council session as the Permanent Representative of China to the OPCW. My delegation and I are prepared to join all the other parties in actively assisting you in your work, so as to contribute to the success of this session.

The Chinese delegation wishes to thank the Director-General and the Vice-Chairpersons of the Council for their respective reports. This delegation associates itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Venezuela to the OPCW, H.E. Ambassador Haifa Aissami Madah, on behalf of the NAM CWC States Parties and China. Now, I would like to take this opportunity to elaborate China’s positions and views further regarding the following issues.

Firstly, China supports the proposal made by the NAM CWC States Parties for the establishment of an Open-Ended Working Group on the balanced promotion of the implementation of the major articles of the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”). The Chinese delegation has taken note of the open and welcome attitude shown by the most States Parties to this proposal. My delegation holds the view that once set up, such an Open-Ended Working Group will be able to instil new vitality into the variety of consultation mechanisms, and bring positive energy to the discussions in the Council. It is the hope of this delegation that consensus will be reached in the Council on the establishment. As for the working group’s list of topics, working methodology and other aspects, including sorting out the group’s relationship with the existing mechanisms, they could be the items of deliberation during the first phase of the group’s work. China is now reviewing the Technical Secretariat’s (“the Secretariat”) non-paper on the tenure policy, and will engage actively in the discussion concerned.



Secondly, China has noted that since the beginning of this year, the Secretariat and Syria have, through a series of structured dialogues, made positive progress on resolving the pending issues regarding the initial declaration on Syrian chemical weapons. China hopes that the parties concerned will take advantage of the current positive momentum in the cooperation, and continue to push forward the settlement of the issue of Syrian chemical weapons.

China has also noticed the work report of the Investigation and Identification Team submitted by the Secretariat. It is China's view that as a specialized international organisation, the OPCW should conduct its work and investigation strictly in compliance with the Convention. The issue of the attribution of responsibility for the use of chemical weapons has already caused a serious confrontation among different parties. The present top priority is to ensure that the investigation of the alleged uses of chemical weapons will get back into the framework of the Convention, and guarantee due process, reliable evidence, and credible conclusions, thereby effectively safeguarding the authority and effectiveness of the Convention. Specifically, the Council must fully exercise its rights and responsibilities entrusted by the Convention, and stringently supervise the activities of the Secretariat, including the investigation. All the investigative work must proceed rigorously within the framework prescribed by the Convention, and the procedures of investigation and evidence collection, as well as the working methodology, must strictly abide by the provisions of the Verification Annex of the Convention.

Recently, different parties have raised some technical questions concerning the FFM's report on the Douma incident, and some divergent voices within the Secretariat have also been reported by the public media. China believes that the Secretariat should pay attention to the questions and doubts raised by the different parties, and clarify the FFM's working methodology and process of arriving at the conclusion. Only by conducting a thorough inquiry of and discussion on the report by the parties, on the basis of facts, can its credibility be fully demonstrated and the authority of the OPCW be thus maintained.

Thirdly, with progress being continuously made in the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles, the destruction of Japanese ACWs is becoming increasingly important to the realisation of the objects and purposes of the Convention. China has to point out that in spite of some progress made in the destructions, the overall process of destruction has been severely delayed. Japanese ACWs still pose a real threat to the lives and properties of the people and the environmental safety in China. The goal of a "world free from chemical weapons" can never be attained as long as Japanese ACWs have not been completely destroyed. China urges Japan strongly to honour its obligation as an Abandoning State Party under the Convention earnestly by increasing its inputs to complete the destruction as soon as possible, in accordance with the decisions and timeframe adopted by the Council.

According to a Council decision concerned, China and Japan officially invite a Council delegation to pay a visit to the Japanese ACW destruction facility at Haerbaling in the Chinese province of Jilin from the 2 to 7 September. China welcomes the active participation by all States Parties. It is China's hope that through the visit with an extensive participation, the visitors will gain first-hand knowledge on the history and the status of Japanese ACWs, so that States Parties will better facilitate the Council, the Conference and the Review Conference in performing their reviewing and monitoring functions.

The Chinese delegation requests that this statement be circulated as an official document of this session and uploaded onto the internal website of the OPCW.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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