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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 NINETY-SECOND SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,  
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 excellent leadership of Chairperson, Ambassador Andrea Perugini of Italy. I assure you of my delegation’s full support.

I would also like to extend my sincere appreciation to the Director-General Fernando Arias and the staff members of the Technical Secretariat (“the Secretariat”) for your opening statement and the reports which are indeed informative and comprehensive. Their professionalism and devotion to our common goal of eliminating chemical weapons are commendable. Also I’d like to acknowledge and commend all activities by Vice Chairs and facilitators.

I would like to begin by recalling the Decision adopted by the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of States Parties in June 2018, in which the OPCW is mandated to identify perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in Syria. We appreciate the ongoing efforts of the Investigation and Identification Team(IIT) to investigate the nine incidents in an objective and impartial way. In particular, we note with appreciation the establishment of the investigation plan as well as internal work practices on information management, evidence collection, and chain of custody. My delegation looks forward to receiving the first report of the IIT soon.

Last month, the IIT Coordinator, Mr Santiago Onate, circulated a letter to States Parties and asked all States Parties to provide relevant information to the IIT for an effective work. We, the States Parties, are obliged under Article 7 of the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”) to provide necessary cooperation to the OPCW in the exercise of its functions. In this regard, my delegation would like to urge all States Parties to extend maximum support for the work of the IIT, which is an integral part of the Secretariat.

My delegation reaffirms its full support for the valuable work of the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) to identify the use of chemical weapons in Syria. The FFM has been fulfilling its



mission in a transparent, independent, and impartial way. We share the past findings of the FFM and look forward to its continued work to the noble end.

We note with concern the report of the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) that the Secretariat could not verify that Syria had submitted a declaration that could be considered accurate and complete. We urge the Syrian Arab Republic to render the fullest possible cooperation to the DAT to address all of the outstanding issues.

My delegation is of the view that the current Draft Programme and Budget for 2020 proposed by the Secretariat is well structured to meet the challenges faced by the Organisation. We note that the proposed Programme and Budget seeks to achieve maximum operational effectiveness within the limits of the zero nominal growth principle. My delegation commends the work done by the co-facilitators, Mr Daniel Baptista of Portugal and Mr Marcin Kawałowski of Poland, as well as by the able staff from the Secretariat.

My delegation is ready to support the Secretariat's proposals, including the one to allocate the 2017 cash surplus to meet the four different needs. However, we are increasingly concerned that the go-live date for the ERP project continues to be delayed. In this regard, my delegation requests that the Secretariat make utmost efforts to facilitate the adoption of the new ERP system into the Organisation. One important element in this will be presenting to States Parties a concrete plan of action with a specific timeline with a view to preventing any further risk of delay.

It is high time we adopted a biennial budgeting cycle. We share the view of the Secretariat, the External Auditor, and the ABAF that a new longer-term budget planning mechanism would be advisable. It would significantly benefit the organization in a number of ways, including by reducing bureaucratic efforts, ensuring greater certainty with regard to funding priorities, and improving organisational efficiency. My delegation encourages all States Parties to join consensus on the adoption of the draft decision on biennial budgeting 2022-23.

As we are increasingly faced with new and emerging challenges, the OPCW needs to keep pace with new developments in chemistry. In particular, we note with concern that central nervous system (CNS)-acting chemicals could be potentially used as chemical weapons under the guise of law enforcement. It is time to take action within the policy making organs to prevent a malicious use of CNS-acting chemicals from happening. In this regard, we would like to ask all delegations to support the recently circulated draft decision on understanding regarding the aerosolized use of CNS-acting chemicals for law enforcement purposes.

It has been almost eight months since the Council Chairperson circulated the non-paper entitled "Way Forward on OPCW Tenure Policy and Related Issues" in February 2019. Since given mandates by the Ninetieth Session of the Council in March, the two co-facilitators, Ambassador Wesaka Puja of Indonesia and Ambassador Agustín Gómez of El Salvador, have worked hard to yield concrete results, which we all appreciate. However, it has proved difficult to reach consensus on this.

The task currently faced by all of us is an urgent one. It is of particular concern that the current framework for workforce management remains unaddressed with its own limitations. This is resulting in a significant loss of productivity. Geographical balance within the Secretariat is another topic which warrants our immediate action.

In this vein, I would like to pay tribute to the Council Chairperson for his practical proposal to end the current stalemate. In particular, my delegation commends him for emphasizing the need to avoid unnecessary duplication with existing facilitations by reactivating the current facilitation mechanism. I hope that we will be able to yield consensual outcomes at this Council session by building on the Council Chairperson's idea.

Universal application of the Convention has been, and continues to be, one of our top priorities. We appreciate the report of the Director-General on the implementation of the Action Plan for the Universality of the Convention. Yet there still remain four States not Party to the Convention. Fully convinced that universality is essential in ensuring full implementation of the Convention, my delegation urges them 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 tailor-made approaches to each of them.

Moreover, we would like to emphasise the importance of adopting national implementing legislation in line with Article VII of the Convention. My delegation notes with concern that only 62 percent of the States Parties have legislation covering all the initial measures. My delegation commends the Secretariat for its ongoing efforts in this regard and encourages the Secretariat to continue to render its assistance to the States Parties in need of technical support.

The Republic of Korea has been hosting an annual workshop to facilitate regional cooperation in the fields of chemical safety and security. My government is glad to announce that the 8th Seoul Workshop on the Peaceful Development and Use of Chemistry will be held from 29 to 31 October in Seoul this year. The workshop will provide valuable opportunities to discuss specific chemical safety and security management issues and to share information and best practices among stakeholders in the region.

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

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

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