

**Statement by Vice Minister Wang Zhijun of the Ministry
of Industry and Information Technology of
the People's Republic of China During the General Debate of
the Twenty-Fourth Session of the Conference of
the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention**

Mr. Chairman,

Please allow me to begin by congratulating you, on behalf of the Chinese delegation, on your election as the Chairman of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention for its Twenty-Fourth Session. The Chinese delegation will fully cooperate with you, and with all the other delegations, in an effort to bring this session to yield positive results.

Mr. Chairman,

This is the first session of the Conference since the Fourth Review Conference. China expresses its deep regret over the failure of the Fourth Review Conference to produce substantive results, and China feels gravely concerned about the increasing tendency towards politicization in the OPCW. At the time when the international security situation is undergoing profound and complex changes, the goal of chemical disarmament has not yet been fully attained, the alleged use of chemical weapons (CWs) has frequently occurred, and it is imperative to strengthen international cooperation and science and technology exchanges in the chemical field, we, as the States Parties to the Convention, have both the responsibility and obligation to reinforce our communication, conduct vigorous cooperation and work to maintain and strengthen the authority and effectiveness of the Convention.

The Chinese delegation associates itself with the statement made by His Excellency Jafar Huseynzada on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and China. Now, please allow me to elaborate further China's positions on some issues.

Mr. Chairman,

Firstly, the objects and purposes of the Convention should be advanced in a balanced way, in order to ensure the full and effective implementation of all its provisions. While chemical disarmament is a core object of the Convention, the promotion of the international cooperation in the chemical field is its vital purpose. The agenda of the OPCW should not be hijacked by certain controversial issues. It remains to be urgent tasks of this Organization to destroy all CW stockpiles and ACWs as soon as possible and to foster international cooperation and science and technology exchanges in the field of chemistry effectively.

China urges the relevant CW possessor state to fulfil its obligation under the Convention in earnest and complete its destruction as soon as possible, pursuant to guidelines set forth in the Sixteenth Session of the Conference of States Parties decision "Final Extended Deadline of 29 April 2012".

In last September, an Executive Council delegation visited the Harbaling Japanese ACW destruction facility. China believes that the visit has served to help all sides gain knowledge on the overall situation, especially on the importance and urgency of the destruction, and facilitated the Council, and the Conference and the Review Conference in carrying on with their review and monitoring of the destruction. Just last month, in a residential area in Jixi City in the Chinese province of Heilongjiang, hundreds of items of suspected Japanese ACWs were newly found. Once again, that highlighted the real harm posed by Japanese ACWs and the utmost urgency of resolving this problem. China urges Japan to honour its obligation under the Convention earnestly, implement the Council decision concerned and increase its inputs, so as to ensure the timely completion of the destruction. China also appeals to all sides to pay continued attention to such issues as the lack of the information on the burial sites of Japanese ACWs and the disposal of the contaminated soil, so that they will be addressed properly.

Secondly, work in the OPCW should be performed strictly according to the provisions of the Convention, so as to prevent the organization from becoming a geopolitical tool. Being the fundamental guideline for States Parties to follow in dealing with CW-related matters, the Convention provides for specific and stringent methodologies and procedures for the investigation of the use of CWs, and for ensuring compliance to the Convention. China is deeply concerned over the resort to voting, as pushed by some states, for the adoption of the decisions on the so-called “Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use”. The top priority at the moment is to standardize the work of the “Investigation and Identification Team”, and make sure that the implementation of the decision concerned revert to the framework of the Convention.

China has noted the disputes among different parties on the fact-finding reports on the incidents in Douma and elsewhere. The Secretariat should attach importance to the doubts expressed by different sides, including its own staffs as reported by news media, and should offer necessary clarifications on the working methodologies of the investigation and the procedures for drawing conclusions. Only when all the parties engage fully in raising questions and having debates on those reports, on the basis of facts, can the credibility of the reports be displayed to the greatest extent possible, so as to preserve the authority of the OPCW.

Thirdly, the tradition of consensus should be consistently maintained, and efforts should be made to resolve disagreements through dialogue and consultation. The principle of consensus constitutes a requisite guarantee for the reasonable concerns of all the parties to be addressed in a balanced manner. The approaches of “only the number of votes counts” and of the easy use of voting will only lead to the division of the OPCW and the intensification of the political confrontation among its member states.

Currently, disputes still exist among different parties with respect to the attribution of the responsibility for the CW use, which exerts once again cast an impact on the Program and Budget of the OPCW, and on its normal functioning. China is concerned that the Council again resorted to voting on budgetary issues, without having full consultation beforehand. China urges States Parties to meet each other halfway and hold discussions among themselves on how to improve the relevant program, in an effort to ensure the normal operation of the OPCW.

Fourthly, States Parties should consistently take a leading role in advancing the transition of the Convention in a safe and sound way. China supports the OPCW in keeping abreast of science and technology developments and adjusting its future priorities accordingly, which is a long-term and gradual process. China supports the initiative to revitalize the existing facilitations to promote progress on all assigned topics and is of the view that the process should be driven by States Parties. In addition, China supports the further improvement of the verification regime of the OPCW, but believes that the discussions on related policy changes should be conducted on the basis of the principles of States Parties taking the main role, openness, transparency and consensus. Interim measures taken by the Secretariat should also be authorized by the decision-making bodies such as the Council or the Conference. The improvement and optimization of the verification measures should be based on the principle that they will cause no extra burden to the industry.

Mr. Chairman,

The Chinese government has steadfastly upheld the objects and purposes of the Convention, faithfully implemented its obligations under the Convention and committed itself to improving its national implementation mechanism.

In January this year, China officially implemented the revised “Implementation Rules for the Regulation of the People’s Republic of China on the Administration of the Chemicals Subjected to Supervision and Control”. The revised version of the Rules further strengthen and improve the national implementation measures, and enhance the punishment to violations. In last April, China once again organized the annual publicity event of the “OPCW Day on April 29th”, in an effort to enhance national publicity and raise social awareness on the implementation of the Convention.

China has submitted its various national declarations to the OPCW on time. China’s declared industry facilities account for 28% of the total of the declarations by all States Parties, leaving its in possession of the most declared and inspectable facilities in the world. From January to November this year, China has already received 28 industry inspections. In the past ten years, China has received 28.6 inspections on a yearly average. Since the entry into force of the Convention, China has received

460 Article VI inspections in total. In addition, China has received 11 Japanese ACW inspections every year, with a total of 142 so far.

China actively supports the work of the OPCW, and has donated 30,000 USD in support of the project of upgrading the OPCW laboratory. China expects the project to contribute to enhancing the capacity building in the developing countries. China has actively engaged in the international cooperation within the scope of the Convention. In last September, China and the OPCW jointly held in Xi'an a medical training course on assistance and protection against CWs. China has also actively provided chemical plants to accommodate the participants for the Industry Segment of the OPCW Associate Program. In next June, China and the Secretariat plan to co-host a high-level meeting in China on the implementation of the Convention for the Asia-Pacific region. The event will focus on the opportunities and challenges for the strengthening of international cooperation in the field of chemistry. Interested States Parties are most welcome to participate.

The Chinese delegation requests the circulation of this statement as an official document of this session of the Conference.

Now, with your permission, Mr. Chairman, I would like to pass the floor to Mr. Kesson Lee, Assistant Director-General of the Trade and Industry Department of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China. He will brief the Conference on the efforts made and measures taken by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region for implementing the Convention.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.