

**The 93rd Session of the Executive Council of the OPCW
General Debate
Statement by H.E. Ambassador Yeondoo Jeong
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea**

March 10, 2020, The Hague -- <As Delievered>

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

As this is my first time taking the floor at the Executive Council, I would like to first reaffirm the unwavering commitment of the Government of the Republic of Korea to the work of the OPCW. We will continue to support the Organization in its noble mission of a world without chemical weapons.

Mr. Chair,

I express my full confidence that this Session of the Executive Council will indeed be guided to a successful conclusion under the able leadership of the Chairperson, Ambassador Andrea Perugini of Italy. And I assure you of my delegation's full support.

I take this chance also to express my sincere appreciation to Director-General Fernando Arias and the staff members of the TS for their tireless efforts to achieve our common goal of a world free of chemical weapons. I was deeply grieved to learn of the tragic loss of an inspection team leader, Mr. Thomas William Galvin. I would like to extend to the TS and to the bereaved families my sincere sympathy and heartfelt condolences.

Mr. Chair,

In June 2018, the Conference of the States Parties, at its Fourth Special Session, adopted a monumental decision on identifying perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. My delegation welcomes that the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) is conducting its investigations in an independent and professional way. And we look forward to the first report of the IIT in the near future.

Article 7 of the Convention requires all States Parties 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 body of the Technical Secretariat.

Mr. Chair,

My delegation reaffirms its full support for the valuable work of the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) to establish facts surrounding allegations of the use of chemical weapons in Syria. The FFM has been fulfilling its mission in a transparent, independent, and impartial way. We note the past findings of the FFM, including its latest report on the Douma incident, and look forward to its continued work on other allegations of chemical weapons use.

We note with concern the report of the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) that the Secretariat remains unable to confirm the accuracy and completeness of Syria's declaration. We urge the Syrian Arab Republic to render the fullest possible cooperation to the DAT to address all of the outstanding issues.

Mr. Chair,

My delegation appreciates the detailed briefing by the Director-General in early February on the investigation into possible breaches of confidentiality. We recognize the findings of the independent investigation report that two former OPCW officials violated their obligations, including that of protecting confidential information. We share the concern with other delegations that such identified breaches may undermine the very credibility of the work of the OPCW. In this regard, my delegation requests that the TS make efforts to review the current confidentiality regime to identify existing gaps and future opportunities. This will be of great value in terms of safeguarding the integrity of this Organization.

Mr. Chair,

The able leadership of the co-facilitators, Ambassador Puja of Indonesia and Ambassador Gomez of El Salvador, has been indispensable in enabling us to embark on substantial discussions on governance issues. We deeply appreciate the tremendous efforts made by the two Ambassadors so far to move forward on the issues.

We welcome the nomination of the new co-facilitators and look forward to being guided by the two Ambassadors to a successful conclusion.

During the five-week-long informal consultations on organizational issues earlier this year, we were able to reach a broad agreement on many issues. With regard to the tenure policy, in particular, we were glad to find a broad convergence of views that the DG should be given more flexibility to keep pace with other non-career organizations. To that end, we need to keep up the current momentum for reform and, in this vein, I would like to urge all States Parties to continue to take a practical and pragmatic approach.

Mr. Chair,

There is growing concern that central nervous system (CNS)-acting chemicals could potentially be used as chemical weapons under the guise of law enforcement. It is high time to take action within the policy making organs to prevent any malicious use of CNS-acting chemicals from ever happening. In this regard, my delegation supports as a co-sponsor the draft decision on understanding regarding the aerosolized use of CNS-acting chemicals for law enforcement purposes, and would like to ask all delegations to join us in supporting the decision.

Mr. Chair,

Universal adherence to the Convention continues to be one of our top priorities. However, there are still four States not Party to the Convention. Universality is essential in ensuring full implementation of the Convention. And, in this regard, my delegation urges them to join the Convention as early as possible without any preconditions. We also request that the TS, in coordination with States Parties, continue to take tailor-made approaches for each of them.

Mr. Chair,

Against a backdrop of evolving challenges there is a growing need for the OPCW to be able to adapt itself to meet them. It is in recognition of this that the Government of the Republic of Korea decided in 2017 to become the first State Party to make voluntary contributions to the new Chem-Tech Centre project. In addition to our contributions in 2018 and 2019, Korea has decided to provide a further 100,000 euros for the project. We are keen to demonstrate once again our abiding commitment to this ambitious undertaking and we encourage others to follow suit.

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

Thank you, Mr. Chair. /END/