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PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

EXPLANATION OF VOTE ON THE DRAFT DECISION “ADDRESSING THE POSSESSION AND USE OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS BY THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC” AT THE NINETY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

The Chinese Delegation voted against the draft decision “Addressing the Possession and Use of Chemical Weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic” just now. I would like to take this opportunity to explain its vote.

Two years ago, some States Parties forcibly pushed, by a vote, the adoption of controversial decision “Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use”. Many States, including China, have raised questions about the establishment of the Investigation and Identification Team, as well as its working methodology and procedure. While these questions are yet to be addressed, some States Parties once again pushed a vote on another draft decision, e.g. “Addressing the Possession and Use of Chemical Weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic”. Such a practice is not constructive. It will only create a division and confrontation among States Parties, and lead to further politicisation of the work of the OPCW. In view of the foregoing, as well as considering the existing position of China on the attribution of the responsibility for the use of chemical weapons, China voted against the above-mentioned draft decision.

Currently, the work of the OPCW is facing grave challenges. Dialogue has been replaced by voting. States Parties stand divided with and opposed to one another on the issue of attribution. On this issue, China’s departing point is to maintain the authority and integrity of the CWC. This is a matter of principle. For any incident of the alleged use of chemical weapons that may happen in any State Party, an impartial and objective investigation should be carried out on the basis of facts and with the CWC as the yardstick. Every State Party is equal before the CWC. All States Parties have the responsibility and obligation to safeguard the effectiveness and integrity of the CWC and the OPCW, rather than going further down the wrong path and letting the OPCW degrade into a geographical, political tool used by some States Parties to suppress others. It is a matter of vital security and interest of every State Party. Once again, China calls on all States Parties to address the issue of the chemical weapons in Syria strictly in accordance with the CWC, so as to preserve the authority and effectiveness of the CWC.

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