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PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR TAN JIAN
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA TO
THE OPCW AT THE NINETY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairman,

Please allow me, on behalf of the Chinese delegation, to begin by congratulating you on your election as the Chairman of the Executive Council (“the Council”) and on your chairmanship for a Council session for the first time. China is confident that, with your diplomatic experience and skills, you will surely be able to improve the work and atmosphere of this Council, consolidate the spirit of unity and consensus among States Parties, and bring this session to a successful conclusion. The Chinese delegation will actively work with you and all the other delegations, in a concerted effort to complete the proceedings of this session successfully.

The Chinese delegation wishes to thank the Director-General and the Vice-Chairpersons for their respective reports. This delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by H.E. Mr Fikrat Akhundov of Azerbaijan on behalf of the States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China. Now, please allow me to elaborate China's views further on the following issues.

Firstly, as an integral part of the international arms control and disarmament mechanism, the OPCW plays a unique and indispensable role in promoting the realisation of “a world free of chemical weapons”, fostering international cooperation in the chemical industry and maintaining international security and stability. However, it is worrying that political differences and confrontation among States Parties on some sensitive issues have adversely affected the conduct of the normal work of the OPCW. On June 11, at the high-level segment of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, Chinese State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi proposed three principles to advance the international arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation processes. These principles are that, firstly, we need to strengthen cooperation for mutual benefits, promote peace and security through cooperation, stand firm against Cold War mentality and zero-sum game, and work to achieve security for all; secondly, we need to uphold fairness and justice, strengthen the authority and effectiveness of the United Nations-centred multilateral disarmament mechanisms, reject exceptionalism and double standards, and work to achieve universal security; and thirdly, we need to take a comprehensive approach to improve governance. We should address immediate prominent security challenges, and at the same time also develop multi-pronged policies to remove potential threats, for the purpose of achieving sustainable security. These three principles are applicable to the OPCW as well. China appeals to all parties to return to our tradition of seeking



consensus, work jointly to improve the working atmosphere in the OPCW, and preserve the authority and effectiveness of the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”) in earnest.

Secondly, the comprehensive and complete destruction of chemical weapons is the core component and object of the Convention. China has noted the progress in the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles in recent years, and urges the only remaining chemical weapons possessor State to fulfil its obligations under the Convention effectively by completing the destruction within the timeframe established by the decision of the Conference of the States Parties on the extension of the deadline for chemical weapons destruction.

The destruction of abandoned chemical weapons constitutes an important integral part of the Convention, on which the realisation of “a world free of chemical weapons” hinges. Despite the impact of COVID-19, China has overcome a multitude of difficulties in carrying out a vast amount of work and reaching agreement with Japan regarding an anti-pandemic plan for the destruction operations. These efforts facilitated the resumption of the destruction at Haerbaling last May. In light of Japan’s undertaking to complete the destruction by the end of 2022, the current overall pace of destruction is still lagging far behind schedule. China urges Japan to fulfil its obligation as an Abandoning State in earnest by stepping up its inputs, making steady headway in the destruction process, and addressing such prominent issues as the contaminated soil properly. China will maintain communication and enhance coordination with Japan and the Technical Secretariat (“the Secretariat”) and provide its assistance as always.

Thirdly, on the issue of the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme, China has always stood for dialogue and cooperation as the only right approach to solving the Syrian chemical weapons issue. China has taken note of the relevant reports circulated by the Director-General and by the Syrian Arab Republic. China encourages the Syrian Arab Republic and the Secretariat to keep up engagement and dialogue, so as to forge positive progress in resolving such outstanding issues as the clarification of Syria’s chemical weapons initial declaration. At the same time, China calls upon the international community to create favourable conditions for both sides to strengthen cooperation and solve the pending issues, instead of denying or even impeding such efforts.

China has always stood against the use of chemical weapons by any state, organisation, or individual, under any circumstances, and for any purpose. The incidents of alleged use of chemical weapons should be investigated and addressed strictly in line with the provisions of the Convention and its Verification Annex and in adherence to the principles of objectivity, impartiality, and professionalism. The investigation should be based on solid facts and come to conclusions that can stand the test of time and history. As for the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT), China has stressed from the very beginning that its establishment went beyond the mandate of the Convention, and has had concerns over its working methodology, procedure, and personnel composition. China calls on the relevant parties to return to the principle of multilateralism at an early date, bring the issue of the investigation of alleged use of chemical weapons back into the framework of the Convention, avoid creating further conflicts and confrontation among States Parties, cease constantly politicising the work of the OPCW, and safeguard jointly the authority and integrity of the Convention.

Finally, China encourages the Chairman, the Vice-Chairpersons, and the facilitators to continue playing their enabling role in facilitating each consultation mechanism to take measures to improve the working methodologies, so as to advance the Convention-related work in all aspects in a comprehensive and balanced manner.

The Chinese delegation requests that this statement be circulated as an official document of this session and be published on the public website and the extranet of the OPCW.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

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