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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-SIXTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,

Please allow me, on behalf of the Chinese delegation, to begin by welcoming you back to the Chair of the Executive Council session. This is the first time that I attend an Executive Council session as the Chinese Permanent Representative. I and the Chinese delegation will work with all other delegations in actively supporting you in your work, in order to help make the proceedings of this session a success.

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

Firstly, as a major international organisation in the field of arms control and disarmament, the OPCW constitutes a vital platform for promoting the creation of a "world free of chemical weapons" and fostering international cooperation in the chemical industry. Meanwhile, it plays an indispensable and unique role in safeguarding international peace, security, and stability. In recent years, however, there has been an evident trend towards politicisation in the work of the OPCW. On some sensitive issues, States Parties have been polarised. And it has been a practice to have confrontation supersede dialogue, and voting replace consensus. If this situation goes on, it will be unfavourable to the healthy development of the OPCW. At the World Economic Forum Virtual Event of the Davos Agenda held recently, Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed that we should all uphold and practise multilateralism; stay committed to international law and international rules instead of seeking one's own supremacy; and remain committed to consultation and cooperation instead of conflict and confrontation. These principles apply 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").

Secondly, the destruction of chemical weapons is a core objective of the Convention, and a key step towards creating "a world free of chemical weapons". 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 complete the destruction at an early date. Due to the impact of COVID-19, the process of the destruction of the Japanese abandoned chemical



weapons (ACWs) has been further delayed. Japan has undertaken to complete the destruction by the end of 2022 of the Japanese ACWs buried at Haerbaling and those at other locations declared to the OPCW by the end of 2016. Time is running short before the deadline. China urges Japan to fulfil its obligations as an Abandoning State Party in earnest, overcome the impact of the pandemic, make steady headways in the destruction, and address such issues as the contaminated soil properly. China will, as always, provide its cooperation.

Thirdly, on the issue of the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme, China has taken note of the relevant reports circulated by the Director-General and by Syria. China encourages the Technical Secretariat (“the Secretariat”) to maintain its dialogue with Syria, so as to forge positive progress in resolving such outstanding issues as the clarification of Syria’s chemical weapons initial declaration. China has always stood against the use of chemical weapons by any State or individual under any circumstances. With regard to the incidents of alleged use of chemical weapons, the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) should strictly abide by the provisions of the Convention and its Verification Annex, and conduct its investigations in the spirit of objectivity, impartiality, and professionalism.

China has repeatedly called upon all sides to bring the implementation of the “Decision on Addressing the Threat Posed by Chemical Weapons Use” back into the framework of the Convention. The working methodology and procedure of the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) should comply with the provisions of the Convention and its Verification Annex. The investigation should be based on solid facts and evidence, and guarantee a complete and closed chain of evidence, which, in turn, ensures that the investigation will lead to an objective, truthful, and impartial conclusion. As the main policy-making organ entrusted by the Convention with the task of addressing the issue of compliance, the Executive Council should fully discharge its powers and functions deriving from the Convention, and stringently supervise the various activities of the Secretariat, including the investigation of alleged use of chemical weapons and the attribution of its responsibility.

Fourthly, regarding the amendment of the Rules of Procedure of the Advisory Body on Administrative and Financial Matters (ABAF), China is of the view that as an open mechanism with no decision-making powers, this body should maintain its diversity and geographical balance. States Parties are entitled to nominating candidates whom they deem qualified. To authorise the Executive Council to dismiss any member of the ABAF is not in line with the common practice of the administrative and financial advisory bodies in international organisations, and will adversely affect the independence of the ABAF. China is concerned about this issue and calls on the sponsors of the relevant draft decision to continue their consultation with all the other parties, in an effort to seek consensus. With regard to the nomination of ABAF members, China calls on all parties to uphold the customary practice and appoint members by consensus.

Fifthly, when it comes to the aerosolised use of central nervous system-acting chemicals for law enforcement purposes, China holds the view that this is as much a technical as a legal matter, which is of significance to the Convention itself, as well as to States Parties’ obligations thereunder, and should thus be dealt with cautiously. China advocates a continued in-depth exchange of views among States Parties on the technical and legal aspects of this matter, in order to forge broad-based consensus. Until then, there should be no rush to force any vote on the relevant draft decision, so as to avoid any negative impact on the authority and legal effect of the Convention.

China has noted that during the general debate, some States raised allegations against the Russian Federation on the issue of “poisoning” Alexei Navalny. China believes that all parties concerned should work for a better mutual understanding and try to resolve their disagreements through consultation and dialogue, instead of easily resorting to sanctions or the threat of sanctions.

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

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

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