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REPUBLIC OF KOREA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR YEONDOO JEONG PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA TO THE OPCW AT THE
100TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,
Director-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

First of all, I sincerely welcome the assumption of the post of Chairperson of the Executive Council by Ambassador Ziad M.D. Al Atiyah of Saudi Arabia. With the benefit of your outstanding leadership and ability, I have every confidence that we will achieve meaningful outcomes from the 100th Session of the Executive Council. I assure you of my delegation's full support in the year ahead.

I take this opportunity also to pay tribute to the tremendous efforts by Director-General Fernando Arias and all the staff members of the Technical Secretariat (the Secretariat) to overcome daunting tasks prompted by the pandemic. We greatly appreciate their work to set the key mandates back on track to fully implement the Chemical Weapons Convention (the Convention).

The Korean Government strongly condemns Russia's armed invasion against Ukraine as a violation of the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter. Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence should be respected. The loss of innocent lives caused by the use of force cannot be justified under any circumstances.

As a responsible member of the international community, the Korean Government supports and joins the international community's efforts to curb the armed invasion and resolve the situation peacefully. We call on the Russian Federation to immediately cease all military actions, withdraw all its forces from the territory of Ukraine and to comply with its obligations under all relevant international law.

Moreover, my government is deeply concerned over the possibility of misuse of toxic chemicals in Ukraine as well as repeated unsubstantiated allegations about chemical provocations. We request that the Secretariat continue to closely monitor the situation in Ukraine and remain ready to address any possible use of chemical weapons. The Republic of Korea reiterates that the use of chemical weapons anywhere by anyone under any circumstances is unacceptable and that those responsible must be held accountable.



Mr Chairperson, my government emphasises its unwavering support for on-going endeavours by the Secretariat to investigate alleged incidents in the Syrian Arab Republic. We value that the Secretariat is doing their utmost to fulfil important tasks in a transparent, independent, impartial, and professional way.

We are deeply concerned at the report that consultations between Syria and the Secretariat are being seriously hampered. We urge Syria to fully cooperate with the Secretariat to immediately take necessary actions to redress the situation and come into compliance with the Convention, in particular as requested by the decision of the Twenty-Fifth Session of Conference of the States Parties (C-25/DEC.9, dated 21 April 2021) which was supported by the Republic of Korea as a co-sponsor. We also look forward to further reports by Syria-related OPCW missions which will be issued in due course.

The use of a nerve agent from the novichok group in poisoning Mr Alexei Navalny in August 2020 has frustrated our collective efforts to achieve a chemical weapons-free world. The Korean Government calls on the Russian Federation, in the territory of which the attack took place, to fully cooperate with the Secretariat to disclose all the circumstances, in a transparent and impartial manner, surrounding this use of a chemical weapon.

We are still facing evolving threats emanating from developments in the scientific and chemical fields. In this respect, there are growing calls for the significant enhancement of the capacity of the OPCW to fully address them adequately and in a timely manner. The new Centre for Chemistry and Technology can indeed serve as a hub for chemical knowledge and training. We trust that it will enhance the capability of all States Parties and the Secretariat on the path ahead and facilitate international cooperation and assistance. As the first State Party to have made voluntary contributions to the project, the Republic of Korea will continue to support this critical initiative going forward.

Mr Chairperson, since the establishment of the OPCW in 1997, universal adherence to the Convention has been a top priority for the Organisation. Convinced that universality is imperative in ensuring full implementation of the Convention, the Republic of Korea urges the four remaining States not Party to the Convention to ratify or accede to it without any preconditions. We also look to the Secretariat to strive to achieve this critical goal at the earliest possible time.

While the successful destruction of more than 99% of the declared chemical weapons is indeed worthy of celebration, there is also a need at this critical juncture to boost our readiness to deal with potential threats including the re-emergence of chemical weapons. In this regard, the Fifth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (Fifth Review Conference) in 2023 will be the best chance not only to look back on achievements and challenges in the past years but also to have forward-looking discussions on how to even better respond to the future environment. We are pleased with the successful start of the Open-Ended Working Group and look forward to our collective wisdom being channelled through this process, yielding meaningful results.

In closing, I request that this statement be circulated as an official document of this session of the Executive Council and published on the OPCW website and external server. Thank you.