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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 101ST SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

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

I would like to convey my sincere appreciation to Chairperson Ambassador Ziad M. D. Al Atiyah of Saudi Arabia for his great endeavours in organising the 101st Session of the Executive Council in such an efficient and transparent manner. I trust that this session will be a chance to garner the wisdom of all participating States Parties. I look forward to it yielding outstanding outcomes under his able leadership, as did the last session.

My deepest gratitude also goes to Director-General Fernando Arias and all the staff members of the Technical Secretariat for their tireless devotion to successfully implement their mandates under the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Despite our collective efforts to nurture a safer world through strong commitment to the universal global norms—including prohibition of all weapons of mass destruction—the global community is again facing serious challenges to international peace and security. Russia's armed invasion of Ukraine is an unjustifiable violation of international law and the United Nations Charter. We call on the Russian Federation to immediately withdraw all its forces from the territory of Ukraine and to comply with its obligations under all relevant international law.

An even greater source of concern is the possibility of misuse of toxic chemicals in Ukraine. We request all States Parties and the Technical Secretariat to remain vigilant and ready to address any possible use of chemical weapons. The Republic of Korea emphasises that the use of chemical weapons anywhere, by anyone, and under any circumstances is unacceptable. At the same time, we denounce any attempt to harm the credibility of the Convention with unsubstantiated allegations about chemical provocation.

We are deeply concerned that the cooperation between Syria and the Secretariat has been seriously hampered since last year. It is still challenging to clarify all gaps, discrepancies, and inconsistencies concerning Syria's declarations, and relevant OPCW teams have not been provided with necessary information by Syria. We urge Syria to fully cooperate with the Technical Secretariat to redress the situation and come into compliance with the Convention, in particular as requested by the Conference of the States Parties decision C-25/DEC.9 (dated 21 April 2021), supported by the Republic of Korea as a co-sponsor.



We appreciate the tireless endeavours by the Secretariat to revitalise engagement with Syria. We also commend the hard work by the Syria-related missions of the OPCW to investigate alleged incidents in a transparent, impartial, and professional way. We look forward to further reports by the Secretariat and reiterate that all those responsible for chemical weapons use must be held accountable.

The use of a nerve agent of a novichok group in poisoning Mr Alexei Navalny in 2020 has remained as a grave concern for States Parties over the past two years. My Government urges Russia, in the territory of which the attack took place, to fully cooperate with the Technical Secretariat to disclose without any more delay all the circumstances surrounding this use of a chemical weapon.

Amidst the global impacts of the unforeseen significant inflation, optimal fine-tuning of the budget is essential for addressing the daunting tasks in the most effective and efficient manner without imposing a much heavier burden on the States Parties. In this regard, we firmly believe that the draft revised Programme and Budget of the OPCW for 2023 is well adjusted to set the key mandates back on track with adequate resources. My delegation commends the work by the Secretariat and is ready to support the proposal.

As threats emanating from advances in chemical technology are evolving, there is a need for more international collaboration to build capacity in the field of chemical safety and security. In this spirit, Korea will gladly host the Tenth Seoul Workshop this November in person. This will be a great chance to share best practices and to enhance chemical safety and security management in Asian States Parties. The Republic of Korea, willingly sharing its knowledge and experience, will continue to contribute to international activities to engage in joint efforts for the peaceful uses of chemistry.

Universal adherence to the Convention remains a top priority to guarantee the effectiveness of the full implementation of the Convention. Indeed, the need for universality will be the subject of far greater attention following the destruction of all declared stockpiles scheduled for next year. We call on the four remaining States not Party to the Convention to ratify or accede to it without any preconditions. We also ask the Technical Secretariat to make utmost efforts to achieve this critical goal in the near future.

With commendable achievements so far including the elimination of more than 99% of the declared chemical weapons stockpiles, we should also identify outstanding challenges and give deep thought on how to address potential chemical threats on the path ahead. The Fifth Review Conference next May will provide a valuable opportunity to enhance the readiness of the OPCW as a whole in key areas, from verification and international cooperation to capacity building. I would like to express my gratitude to Ambassador Lauri Kuusing of Estonia for his outstanding leading role in the process of preparing for the Review Conference in an open and inclusive way. My delegation will indeed constructively contribute to the discussions to achieve meaningful outcomes.

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

Thank you.