



JAPAN

Statement

by

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Mr Chairperson,
Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,

First of all, let me assure you, Chairperson of this Session, Ambassador Vusimuzi Philemon Madonsela of South Africa, of the full support from the Japanese delegation. I would also like to thank the Director-General for his statement.

Mr Chairperson,

Japan reiterates that any use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anyone under any circumstances is unacceptable and that those responsible must be held accountable.

Regarding the cases in which the Fact-Finding Mission reports concluded that there were reasonable grounds to believe that chemical weapons were used in Syria, I understand that the Secretariat is working on the investigation in a professional and impartial manner. Japan looks forward to the next report where new findings will be presented.

Japan continues to urge Syria to ensure accountability by addressing all outstanding issues identified by the Declaration Assessment Team.

Regarding the poisoning of Mr Alexei Navalny, Japan urges the States Parties concerned, particularly Russia on whose territory the attack took place, to cooperate for prompt clarification of this case of chemical weapons use.

The possibility or threat of the use of chemical weapons in Ukraine is of grave concern. In this regard, Japan welcomes the Secretariat's efforts to closely monitor the situation in Ukraine and, in collaboration with the United Nations, to prepare to react in case of an incident involving chemical warfare agents or toxic industrial chemicals. This

includes preparing for rapid protective measures and fact-finding in response to any cases of emergency.

Mr Chairperson,

We understand that the draft for the 'revised budget for 2023' is aimed at responding to the impact of the unforeseeable significant inflation and the security requirements. We support the draft for the 'revised budget', which ensures the activities required for the OPCW to fulfil its mandate without any change to the assessed contributions by utilising the 2020 cash surplus. However, it is not possible to predict how long the cash surplus will continue to offset the increase of the budget. If, in the future, a decision to raise the assessed contributions would be made, it would result in an increase of arrears as well unless the collection of outstanding payments would be properly addressed. It will not be easy to gain the understanding of those States Parties that have paid timely and in full for the increase of assessed contributions. We expect that the Secretariat will achieve significant progress in its initiative to collect the arrears.

Mr Chairperson,

Japan continues to undertake every effort for, and commits itself firmly to, the abandoned chemical weapons (ACW) destruction project in China. Japan, in fact, has collected approximately 90,000 items and completed the destruction of about 63,000 of them. Japan has already spent approximately 3.1 billion euro from its own account.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were forced to postpone all destruction activities of ACWs from April 2020 onwards. However, in addition to the existing destruction facilities, the Haerbaling Large Chambers (HLCs) started their operation last October. Comparing to the current 'controlled detonation chambers', HLCs have about 12 times the destructive capabilities. The destruction operations in Harbin and the excavation and recovery operations at other sites have also been resumed.

The destruction plan beyond the year 2022 jointly submitted by Japan and China was considered and adopted at the 101st Session of the Executive Council. Japan has been making the best possible efforts for the steady implementation of the destruction plan while appreciating the appropriate cooperation with China.

Mr Chairperson,

Japan urges the Secretariat to continue to make effort for achieving the full universality of the Convention. We reiterate the importance of maintaining the readiness for the accession of States not Parties, in particular those who may accede to the Convention as possessor States.

Mr Chairperson,

Amidst the ever-changing security environment and the developments in science and technology, it is imperative to jointly and effectively tackle the threat posed by the use of chemical weapons. In this respect, Japan continues to actively contribute to the Open-Ended Working Group for the Preparation of the Fifth Review Conference in our capacity as one of the Vice-Chairs, as well as to the Review Conference hopefully as one of the Vice-Chairs.