



JAPAN

**Statement**

**by**

**H.E. Ambassador MINAMI Hiroshi,  
Permanent Representative of Japan to the OPCW, and  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary,  
Embassy of Japan in the Kingdom of the Netherlands**

**At the One Hundred and Third Session  
of the Executive Council of the OPCW**

**The Hague, 11-14 July 2023**

Mr Chairperson,  
Director-General,  
Distinguished delegates,

First of all, please allow me to start by expressing my sincere appreciation to my nomination as the Vice-Chairperson of the Council representing the Asia Group. Let me assure you, Executive Council Chairperson, Ambassador Lucian Fătu, of the support from me and my delegation. Also, let me express my gratitude to Director-General Ambassador Fernando Arias for his report.

The Fifth Review Conference, including the Open-Ended Working Group for its preparation, allowed us to deepen our discussions on various issues of the OPCW. The States Parties negotiated and, in many cases, compromised each one of the parts of the draft document as a whole package. Despite such efforts, however, it is regrettable that an outcome document was not issued. In this respect, Japan would like to actively contribute to the discussions in the EC and CSP on various issues of the OPCW without taking the accommodated paragraphs in the draft for granted as an achievement in and of themselves.

Mr Chairperson,

We congratulate on the completion of the destruction of U.S. stockpile chemical weapons, which is a major achievement of the CWC and the OPCW. We commend the efforts made by the United States and the Technical Secretariat.

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. In this regard, we point out the following.

The use of chemical weapons in Syria is of grave concern to the peace and security of the international community. Japan condemns the Syrian Government's use of chemical weapons, as the third report of the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) concludes there are reasonable grounds to believe. We commend the professional, impartial and independent work conducted by the Technical Secretariat, which came to their conclusions through scientifically analysing the vast amounts of information and considering all possible scenarios. We strongly oppose any attempt to undermine their invaluable work.

We reiterate our support for the Technical Secretariat's continued work on the identified gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies in the declaration submitted by Syria. Japan urges Syria once again to ensure accountability for the incidents in which the use of chemical weapons were confirmed, in accordance with decisions of the policy making organs, through full cooperation with the activities of the Technical Secretariat, including the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT).

Regarding the poisoning of Mr Alexei Navalny, Japan urges Russia to cooperate and provide a prompt clarification of this case of chemical weapons use.

The possible use or threat of use of chemical weapons in Ukraine is also of grave concern. In this regard, Japan welcomes the Technical Secretariat's efforts to closely monitor the situation in Ukraine and to provide assistance and protection to Ukraine, since these activities serve to provide rapid protective measures and fact-finding in response to any case of an incident involving chemical warfare agents. We are concerned by the information that riot control agents had been used in Ukraine.

Mr Chairperson,

Let me touch upon the abandoned chemical weapons (ACW) destruction project in China of which destruction plan beyond the year 2022 stipulates that the relevant States Parties jointly affirmed their best efforts be used towards the completion of the destruction of ACWs as early as possible. In accordance with the provisions of the Convention, as well as the destruction plan, Japan plays its roles by providing all necessary finances, technology, experts, facilities as well as other resources including those implemented by China for the purpose of destroying the ACWs.

The Haerbaling Large Chambers (HLCs), as well as the excavation and recovery operations in various sites, have been steadily implemented. Japan intensifies its efforts towards the achievement of the destruction plan along with the appropriate cooperation of China. We will provide details in the Agenda Item 7.

Mr Chairperson,

Industrial inspections are of importance among the discussions of the implementation of the Convention. Japan will be actively participating in the on-going discussions at the industrial clusters, in order to consider concrete measures for sustainable and efficient industrial inspections.

Mr Chairperson,

It is important that all States Parties must stand together in order to effectively deal with the threat of the use of chemical weapons amidst changes in the security environment and advances in science and technology. In this regard, Japan will actively engage in the discussions on the programme and budget of the OPCW for 2024-2025, which is directly related to the effective and efficient use of its limited resources. Japan expects that all States Parties unite to work together in the spirit of cooperation and reiterate our commitment to the Convention.