



JAPAN

Statement

by

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Mr Chairperson,
Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,

First of all, please allow me to start by assuring 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 and the Vice-Chairpersons of the Council, for the respective reports.

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;

14 October 2023 marks the tenth anniversary of Syria becoming a state party to the Chemical Weapons Convention. However, 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 IIT reports for their professional, impartial and independent contents. We strongly oppose any attempt to undermine their invaluable work.

With regard to the Syrian chemical weapons dossier, Japan urges Syria once again to ensure accountability for the incidents in which the use of chemical weapons were confirmed, 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. We are concerned by the announcement by the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine that Russia has used riot control agents as a method of warfare on Ukrainian territory. 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.

Mr Chairperson,

The abandoned chemical weapons (ACWs) project in China is one of the most important issues in the Convention for Japan. This project has faced unprecedented difficulties, but Japan has made the utmost efforts, by investing enormous human and financial resources, for the progress of the destruction of ACWs in China. As of 31 August 2023, Japan, in fact, has collected approximately 105,000 items and completed the destruction of about 78,000 of them.

We will provide details in Agenda Item 7.

Mr Chairperson,

With the end of the destruction of the declared chemical weapons stockpile, the role of the CWC and OPCW further shifts from the destruction of chemical weapons to the prevention of and response to their re-emergence. In this regard, the draft budget deals with extremely important issues, including the start of operations of the Centre for Chemistry and Technology, the restructuring proposals for the inspectorate, while emphasising knowledge management.

We praise the efforts made by all the TS staff involved in the budget preparation, as well as the co-facilitators of the budget facilitation.

It is necessary to ensure that the OPCW is able to carry out the activities that are required for it to fulfil its mandate, by utilizing cash surplus to mitigate pressure on assessed contributions.

In order to fulfil the mandate of the OPCW in the face of limited resources, Japan encourages the Secretariat to consider a mechanism which serves to improve the implementation of the Results-based Management (RBM). The RBM, through needs assessments, monitoring, evaluation, impact studies and meaningful key performance indicators amongst other means, is essential for increasing effectiveness and efficiency. The Secretariat is requested to pursue a more systematic application of the RBM. In this context, it is also important to evaluate the implementation of the first biennial programme and budget, and to improve the budgetary process by reflecting on lessons learned for the future cycle of the biennial programme and budget.

We expect the Secretariat to achieve significant progress in its initiative to collect the arrears, especially from those that are one or more years in arrears, otherwise the arrears would continue to accumulate, even if an increase of assessed contributions were to be decided upon.

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 the ever-changing security environment and advances in science and technology. Japan expects that all States Parties unite to work together in the spirit of cooperation and reiterate our commitment to the Convention.

Last but not least, I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to Mrs. Kazumi Ikeda-Larhed, Director of International Cooperation and Assistance Division for her dedication. I have known her since I was posted in New York in 2014 and she worked for the UN Volunteers. And it is regrettable that she has to leave the OPCW. I wish her and her family good health and success.