

**The 109th Session of the Executive Council of  
the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)  
General Debate**

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Seok-in Hong  
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the OPCW**

**8 July, 2025, The Hague**

Mr. Chair,  
Mr. Director-General,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,

I sincerely thank the Chair Ambassador Thomas Schieb for preparing this meeting. I also extend my deep appreciation to the Director-General Fernando Arias and the Secretariat staff for all their hard work.

Since this is the first time I take the floor at the regular Executive Council meeting, I would like to express my gratitude for the warm welcome extended to me by the Chairperson, the Director-General and the members of the Council. I look forward to constructive cooperation with the TS and all delegations.

Mr. Chair,

The recent political developments in Syria offer an unprecedented opportunity to fully uncover the extent and scope of Syria's chemical weapons program and to bring the country into full compliance with the Convention. The Republic of Korea appreciates the swift response of the TS since December of last year to finally resolve this issue, including the dedicated briefing on 23 May to provide State Parties with a detailed account of these visits. We also commend Syria's efforts in providing necessary support to the OPCW team and hope this cooperation continues.

Nevertheless, we fully recognize the many challenges that remain, including the lack of information about the former government's chemical weapons program and the limitations in the TS' human and financial resources. We believe that strong support from States Parties is essential to overcoming these challenges. In this regard, the Republic of Korea is pleased to have made a contribution of 100,000 euros to the OPCW Syria Trust Fund, and will continue to actively support the TS' work going forward.

We note the recent establishment of the Office of Special Mission (OSM) within the Secretariat, bringing together the DAT, IIT and FFM under a single framework. We welcome the TS' assurance that all three functions will continue to receive equal priority under the new structure, and encourage close coordination to ensure this balance is effectively reflected in implementation. We also appreciate the inclusion of the IIT's Chief Coordinator as a member of the OSM team deployed to Syria in June. The Republic of Korea would like to reiterate that impunity for the use of chemical weapons cannot be tolerated, and accountability must be pursued.

Mr. Chair,

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has raised concerns over the possible misuse of toxic chemicals, including the use of riot control agents (RCAs) as a method of warfare. In particular, we express our deep concerns that the third TAV (Technical Assistance Visit) report, following the first and second reports, has again confirmed the presence of CS, a riot control agent, on the battlefield in Ukraine. Any use of chemical weapons, including the use of RCAs as a method of warfare, is strictly prohibited under Article I of the Convention. We appreciate the TS' efforts for releasing this report, and call on the TS to maintain its readiness to continue providing its assistance to State Parties through its independent expertise.

In relation to the joint statement issued last week by the Netherlands and Germany, this matter is relevant to the compliance of the CWC, and should be promptly addressed by the Technical Secretariat. We encourage all concerned States Parties to extend their cooperation.

Mr. Chair,

We recognize that advances in science and technology, including AI, can have a significant impact on the implementation of the CWC. In this regard, we welcome the convening of the first meeting of the OPCW Scientific Advisory Board (SAB)'s Temporary Working Group on AI last April. We look forward to the implementation of the SAB's initial recommendations and the forthcoming formal advisory note of the group to the Director-General. We appreciate Director-General and the TS for their continued efforts to build on a series of initiatives aimed at deepening understanding of AI and its implications, including 2024 Global Conference on AI and the CWC, joint OPCW-China workshop on AI and the OPCW AI Research Challenge.

The Republic of Korea believes that the appointment of the next Director-General is a matter of great importance to ensure the continued fulfillment of the organization's mandate and effectively respond to the many challenges it faces. We appreciate the efforts of regional group coordinators and the TS in facilitating the candidate meetings with regional groups in early June, as well as the informal Executive Council meeting held yesterday (July 7). We hope that the process ahead will be conducted in a fair and inclusive manner, enabling a smooth and constructive selection of the next Director-General.

Last but not least, the Korean government reiterates the significance of universality of the Convention. We can be assured all chemical arsenals have been declared and destroyed only when the States outside the Convention accede to the CWC and take on its responsibility accordingly. In this regard, we urge the four remaining States not Party, including the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), to join the Convention as early as possible without preconditions.

Thank you. /END/