

The 30th Session of the Conference of the States Parties
General Debate
Statement by H.E. Ambassador Seok-in Hong
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to
the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

24 November 2025, The Hague

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

Let me begin by congratulating Ambassador Agustin Vasquez Gomez of El Salvador, on your assumption of the Chairperson. I assure you of my delegation's full support. I also wish to express my appreciation to outgoing Chairperson, Ambassador Almir Sahovic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, for his leadership over the past year.

I would also like to thank Director-General Fernando Arias and all the staff members of the Technical Secretariat (TS) for their continued efforts to fully implement the core mandates of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

Mr. Chair,

This year marks a critical turning point in one of the most significant challenges facing the OPCW – the complete elimination of Syria's chemical weapons program. The Republic of Korea welcomes the progress achieved this year through cooperation between the TS and the Syrian government. We further acknowledge the adoption of the decision on the expedited on-site destruction of any remaining chemical weapons in Syria at the 110th Executive Council session. We sincerely hope that the Syrian dossier will be concluded without delay, thereby reducing the risk of proliferation, and the Republic of Korea will remain committed to contributing to this efforts.

Turning to Ukraine, the Russian invasion has now been ongoing for more than three and a half years, and the Republic of Korea is deeply concerned about allegations regarding the use of toxic chemicals – including riot control agents and chloropicrin – in the ongoing war in Ukraine. In particular, we are troubled by the three OPCW Technical Assistance Visit (TAV) reports, which have confirmed the presence of the RCAs as a method of warfare on the battlefield in Ukraine. We view these findings with grave concern and underline the need for attribution of confirmed cases through appropriate OPCW mechanisms.

Mr. Chair,

Given the growing threats of chemical terrorism, the importance of chemical safety and security cannot be overemphasized. The Republic of Korea has been making utmost efforts to share its knowledge and best practices for the peaceful development and use of chemistry in the Asian region by co-hosting annual workshops with the TS in Seoul since 2012. The 13th Workshop was successfully held last month, from 28 to 30 October. And indeed, we reaffirm our commitment to further enhancing regional capacity in the chemical sector.

In addition to hosting the annual Seoul Workshops, we have also supported a wide range of ICA programs to strengthen States Parties' chemical capacity. Last September, under the OPCW Associate Program, we welcomed officials from Member States to Korea, providing them with hands-on experience at our industrial facilities. In addition, my government has made a voluntary contribution to the Biotoxin Fellowship for African scientists which will soon be organized by the ChemTech Centre.

Mr. Chair,

The Korean government welcomes the nomination of the first female candidate, Ambassador Sabrina Dallafior Matter of Switzerland, for the post of OPCW Director-General, as recommended by the Executive Council. We are confident that Ambassador Matter, with her extensive experience in the field of disarmament, will provide strong leadership to the

OPCW. We also express our deep appreciation to the 10 candidates for their active participation and commend their dedication throughout the selection process and also to Ambassador Schieb of Germany, Chair of the EC, for his coordination efforts.

Last but not least, my delegation highlights the significance of ensuring the universality of the Convention. In order to secure the full effectiveness of the Convention even after the destruction of all declared chemical weapons, ensuring universality should be discussed as one of the priorities within the OPCW. 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 any preconditions. We request that the TS enhance its readiness to welcome new members and strengthen its efforts to facilitate the engagement of States not Party.

Thank you. /END/