

(Check against Delivery)

**Statement by Deputy Director-General Chul-min PARK
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea
at the 18th Session of Conference of States Parties to the CWC
The Hague, 3 December 2013**

Mr. Chairman,
Director-General,
Distinguished Delegates, and Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by joining previous delegations in congratulating you for being elected as the Chairperson at this critical juncture in the history of the Convention. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation during your tenure. I would also like to congratulate Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü for his re-appointment as the Director-General. We appreciate his leadership and tireless efforts dedicated to advance the work of the OPCW over the years.

The year 2013 marks a historical milestone for the OPCW; the success of the 3rd Review Conference, Somalia's and Syria's joining the Convention, the Decision on the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons, and the winning of Nobel Peace Prize. In particular, the Nobel Peace Prize to the OPCW is surely the recognition of the importance of the Convention as well as the OPCW's contribution to the global peace and security for the past 16 years. We have no doubt that these achievements are the result of strenuous and consistent efforts of Director-General Üzümcü and the Technical Secretariat as a whole under his leadership. It is our strong belief and confidence that such positive trend will go towards ensuring the full universalization and impeccable implementation of the Convention in close sync with all member states.

Mr. Chairman,

As we are to embark on the most critical yet difficult stage of destruction phase of the Syrian chemical weapons, my delegation would like to emphasize the following five elements, especially given the complexity of the plan to destroy chemical weapons outside

the Syrian territory and the ambitious goal to complete the destruction during the first half of next year.

First, importance is securing safety of the Joint Mission staffs, especially during the transportation of chemical toxins. We call upon all those who have influence on the warring parties in Syria, the OPCW, the UN, and other member states, to exert more efforts in this regard.

Second, the political will of the Government of Syrian Arab Republic and its full cooperation to the OPCW and the UN is vital for the successful completion of the destruction plan. We take note that Syria has met the deadline set by the OPCW Decision to complete the functional destruction by the end of October.

We expect such cooperation continues in a faithful and serious manner until the end of the Phase III.

Third, given the gravity and scale of the work ahead, voluntary contribution by member states is essential. It is encouraging that increasing number of Member States is providing voluntary contribution. The Government of the Republic of Korea also has made a financial contribution to the OPCW Trust Fund for Destruction. We will continue to support the concerted efforts by the international community for the successful completion of the work of the Joint Mission.

Fourth, my delegation attaches great importance to the transparency in the work of the Joint Mission, which allows States Parties to review the progress and evaluate whether the work is implemented according to the Decision. Such process will allow States Parties to play a constructive role when necessary. In this vein, we appreciate the Technical Secretariat for its detailed briefings on the progress of the Joint Mission.

Fifth but not least, the use of chemical weapons by anyone under any circumstances is unacceptable as a grave war crime and a serious violation of international law. The Republic of Korea condemns this heinous crime in the strongest possible terms. Anyone who is responsible for the use of chemical weapons must be held accountable. Fighting against impunity should be pursued in due course through the thorough investigation.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation appreciates that the membership of the CWC has reached 190 this year with the joining of Somalia and Syria. It is highly encouraging that we are gradually approaching the full universality of the Convention. In this context, we urge those six countries that have not acceded to the Convention yet, including North Korea, to do so without further delay.

I turn to the Budget for the year 2014. Considering the urgent need to concentrate all available resources to the destruction of chemical weapons in Syria, my delegation supports the decision to postpone the establishment of *Knowledge Management Center* and *Contingency Operating Unit*. However, since the two projects are expected to greatly contribute to strengthen the CWC regime, my delegation is of the view that the two projects should be carried out as early as practicable, hopefully in 2015.

Mr. Chairman,

The implementation of International Cooperation and Assistance is one of the core objectives of the Convention. The Republic of Korea has contributed to ratching up the capacity building of the States Parties in need, while sharing its knowledge and experience in the peaceful development and safety management of chemical industry. In this context, the Korean government hosted International Workshops on Article X and Article XI of the Convention for member states in the Asian region this year following last year. Such efforts will remain unabated.

In closing, I would like this statement to be treated as an official document of the 18th Session of the Conference of States Parties.

I thank you for your attention. /End/

