



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Twenty-First Session
28 November – 2 December 2016

C-21/NAT.20
28 November 2016
ENGLISH only

JAPAN

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR HIROSHI INOMATA
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JAPAN TO THE OPCW AT THE
TWENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,
Director-General,
Distinguished delegates and friends,

First, I would like to echo other delegations, in congratulating you, Ambassador Christoph Israng, on your election as Chairperson of this session of the Conference of the States Parties. I would also like to express my gratitude to the outgoing Chairperson, Ambassador Eduardo Ibarrola-Nicolín.

Let me start with some notable developments this year.

Under the current security environment, the importance of the Chemical Weapons Convention cannot be overemphasised. In particular, the issue of chemical weapons in Libya was an extremely difficult security challenge. We should do our best to prevent chemical weapons and toxic chemicals falling into the hands of non-State actors and terrorists. From that perspective, we welcome the fact that Libya's Category 2 chemical weapons have been successfully removed out of Libya and their destruction has made steady progress.

We appreciate that the OPCW, with cooperation of Member States, was able to demonstrate once again its enduring ability to respond to a complex situation by playing a critical role.

The Government of Japan continues to pay great attention to the situation related to the chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, which is currently the highest priority for the OPCW. We regret that many problems remain unsolved in 2016.

In particular, we are very much concerned about the initial declaration by the Syrian Arab Republic as it indicates discrepancies and a lack of accuracy and completeness. Although we noted that parts of the Syrian Scientific Studies and Research Center (SSRC), which is alleged to have links with the chemical weapons programme, have been additionally declared under the related provisions of the Convention, we believe further progress is needed. We would like to urge the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to cooperate with the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) to fulfil its obligation under the Convention, by resolving all remaining issues, including the declaration of all remaining relevant parts of the SSRC required by the Technical Secretariat.



We are deeply concerned about the situation where chemical weapons have been continuously used in Syria at the time that the international community has addressed the issue with a strong sense of urgency, and condemn in the strongest possible terms any use of chemical weapons which poses a challenge to the global norms of prohibiting the use of chemical weapons. Needless to say, the use of chemical weapons cannot be allowed by anyone under any circumstances or for any reason.

Our Government pays special attention to the reports of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) and its conclusion. According to the fourth report, chemical weapons were used by the Syrian Arab Armed Forces in three locations and by the so-called “Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant” (ISIL) in one location in Syria. Japan expresses serious concerns over the use of chemical weapons confirmed by the reports, and condemns in the strongest possible terms, the use of chemical weapons and the violation of the Convention. Furthermore, we are deeply concerned about the claim not to respect the JIM’s report and allegation that the JIM is not neutral. Japan fully supports the continuation of the work of the JIM and welcomes the one-year extension of its mandate by the United Nations Security Council. Those who are responsible for the use of chemical weapons should be identified and brought to justice to prevent recurrence. In this regard, Japan also welcomes that the OPCW sent a strong message by adopting a decision at the Eighty-Third Session of the Executive Council.

In recent years, we have witnessed changing circumstances, both negative and positive, surrounding the OPCW, such as the continuous use of chemical weapons in Syria, threats of non-State actors, and steady progress on the destruction of stockpile chemical weapons by possessor States. Nevertheless, it is important not to lose sight of the core objectives of the Convention. Against this backdrop, Japan will actively participate in the efforts of the Open-Ended Working Group on Future Priority, while taking into consideration the following points:

- a) First, at the time when full destruction of the stockpile of chemical weapons is anticipated to be accomplished in the near future, the critical importance of the core functions of the OPCW, namely the destruction of the chemical weapons, the prevention of the re-emergence of chemical weapons and emergency response, remains unchanged.
- b) Second, further promotion of the universality of the Convention is crucial for Japan, especially having in mind the situation where the neighbouring country of North Korea has not joined the Convention. Enhancing the effectiveness of the Convention through national implementation measures is equally important. The OPCW should also maintain and strengthen its capabilities to promptly respond to any contingency, including challenge inspections.
- c) Third, in connection with the prevention of the re-emergence of chemical weapons, the role of the industry verification is increasingly important. Although it is most important for all States Parties to fulfil their obligations under the Convention, such as declarations under Article VI, we should also make every effort to carefully consider arranging a more effective and efficient verification regime for relevant facilities, which might have potential risk under the Convention without imposing too much of a burden on chemical industries.

- d) Lastly, organisational issues, including staffing and budget, should be reviewed and considered open-mindedly for better cost-benefit.

At the same time, it goes without saying that it is essential to maintain a healthy and sustainable financial basis of the OPCW, in order to ensure that the OPCW continues to play an important role in the future. Japan strongly believes it is critical to maintain an efficient and effective budget without increasing the total budget by constantly reviewing the prioritisation among various programmes in the annual budget process.

With this in mind, we express our serious concern over the non-payment of assessed annual contributions and reimbursements which aggravates the financial situation of the OPCW. We would like to strongly urge the States Parties concerned to pay their outstanding balances as quickly as possible.

Last but not least, let me touch upon the issue of abandoned chemical weapons (ACWs).

I reiterate our Government's position that the destruction of ACWs is the most important commitment Japan has made under the Convention. Japan has been making the utmost effort to destroy ACWs in China, by investing enormous resources, both financial and technical, in the ACW destruction projects.

As the Director-General stated in his opening statement, the progress of the ACW projects has been made with the valuable on-site joint efforts by Japan and China, in which each country bears the responsibility for its own roles. I would like to underline that, without the constructive cooperation and close coordination between Japan and China, these unprecedented difficult projects could not have been carried out and that is a view we share.

With regard to progress of the ACWs destruction with the mobile destruction facilities annexed to the decision of the Sixty-Seventh Session of the Executive Council (EC-67/DEC.6), approximately 87% of the ACWs declared to the OPCW by Japan as of 29 April 2012 have been destroyed to date. As I reported to the Executive Council at the last two sessions, the respective ACW offices of Japan and China are discussing the work plan beyond 2016. We will report the progress to the Executive Council as soon as Japan and China have reached an agreement on a future destruction plan. In this connection, Japan reaffirms its sincere and firm commitment to exert the greatest possible effort on our part for the early and complete destruction of ACWs with the adequate and faithful cooperation of China.

In order to promote correct understanding, a photo and video exhibition on the ACW project is being held at the World Forum during this Session. We will also host a side event on the ACW project in the lobby tomorrow evening and would like to invite all of you to this side event.

Finally, I would like to reassure you of our delegation's full support and cooperation to ensure the successful conduct of this Session.

I thank you for your attention.