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JAPAN

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR HIROSHI INOMATA
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TWENTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

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

First of all, I would like to echo other delegations, in congratulating you, Ambassador Bellouki of Morocco, on your assumption 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 Israng of Germany.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to commend Technical Secretariat officials for their daily dedication supported by a high level of neutrality and professionalism under the leadership of the Director-General, His Excellency Mr Ahmet Üzümcü.

Also, Japan welcomes that the Eighty-Sixth Session of the Executive Council, held in October, recommended that this session of the Conference appoint Ambassador Fernando Arias of Spain as the Director-General for the next term of office.

This year's session is held in the year to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention and of the establishment of the OPCW.

Over the last 20 years, Japan has been engaging in various OPCW forums in a proactive manner, and contributed to developing and strengthening the implementation of the Convention. For example, Japan has accepted many officials from developing countries through the associate programs under the international cooperation based on Article XI.

Next month, Japan will organise an event to celebrate the 20th anniversary in Tokyo, which will be a good opportunity to widely inform about the Convention's roles and achievements, as well as Japan's commitments and to emphasise the necessity of further cooperation for realising "a world free of chemical weapons".

We have witnessed some notable progresses in this year alone. The complete destruction of chemical weapons possessed by the Russian Federation is one of the major milestones for the OPCW. We highly commend all the efforts made by the Russian Federation, the Executive Council, Technical Secretariat as well as other States Parties which supported the efforts.



On the other hand, we are still facing serious challenges.

The most serious example is the catastrophic loss of life as a result of the repeated use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. The issues related to chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic remain the top priority for the OPCW.

According to the report made by the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) and the subsequent note by the Director-General issued last month, many issues remain unsolved, and Japan is deeply concerned over the situation. We would like to urge the Syrian Arab Republic to cooperate further with the DAT for the fulfilment of its obligation under the Convention.

Our Government once again expresses our grave concern over the findings of the seventh report of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), concluding that it is convinced that the Syrian Government and Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) were responsible for the use of chemical weapons, and condemns in the strongest possible terms any use of chemical weapons and the violation of the Convention. In order to prevent recurrence, Japan hopes that measures be taken to identify the perpetrators and place full responsibilities on them, and thus we support the renewal of the work of the JIM.

In this regard, Japan submitted its proposal to the United Nations Security Council to tentatively renew the JIM's mandate for a period of 30 days on 17 November, just after both U.S. and Russian proposals had been rejected. It is deeply regrettable that the United Nations Security Council has failed to extend the mandate of the JIM, and thus the JIM's operations are halted. The use of chemical weapons cannot be allowed under any circumstances, and Japan intends to continue its efforts to collaborate with the international community to reveal the truth including the identification of the perpetrators.

Another example is a fatal incident at the international airport in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia where nerve agent VX was used last February. It is still fresh in our memory that the Executive Council adopted the decision to express its grave concern over this incident.

Japan, as a State Party that has suffered from the Tokyo sarin gas attack, cannot tolerate the use of chemical weapons under any circumstances, and would like to emphasise that all the States should cooperate to realise "a world free of chemical weapons".

As witnessed in the Syrian Arab Republic and Malaysia, the use and re-emergence of chemical weapons is the most significant and urgent issue.

The Fourth Review Conference next year will be a good opportunity to discuss the future priorities of the Convention and the OPCW, while keeping in mind the following points:

First, though we have witnessed the progress in the destruction of the chemical weapons stockpiles, the incidents where chemical weapons have been used reminded us of the critical importance of the core functions of the OPCW, namely the complete destruction of the chemical weapons, the prevention of the re-emergence of chemical weapons and emergency response remains unchanged.

Second, further promotion of the universality of the Convention is crucial for realising "a world free of chemical weapons". In particular, having in mind its geographical proximity to our nation, Japan urges North Korea to immediately accede to the Convention.

Third, in connection with the prevention of the re-emergence of chemical weapons and of its use by non-State actors, it is an indispensable measure for each State Party, including developing nations, to set up and implement national implementation measures. There are no short-cuts, but steady implementation is important. Also, more robust inter-agency coordination is essential.

Lastly, effective industry verification is increasingly important to prevent the re-emergence of chemical weapons. Indeed, it is essential to fulfil our obligations under the Convention, such as declarations under Article VI. In addition to this, taking into account the development in science and technology, we should also vigorously consider pursuing strict and effective verification measures to avoid an excessive burden on chemical industries.

At the same time, it goes without saying that it is essential to maintain a priority-based organisation management as well as a healthy and sustainable financial basis of the OPCW in order to ensure that it continues to play an important role in the future.

Japan strongly believes it is critical to prioritise various programmes in the annual budget process and urges the countries in arrears to pay their outstanding balance in assessed annual contributions and reimbursements. Japan is of the view that it is important to continuously review the organisational structure based on its priorities.

Last but not least, let me touch upon the issue of the destruction of abandoned chemical weapons, which is the most important commitment Japan has made under the Convention and which is carried out in cooperation with China.

Japan has been making the utmost efforts to destroy the chemical weapons abandoned by Japan on the territory of China, by investing enormous resources including a fund of approximately EUR 1.58 billion to date. Significant progress has been achieved with approximately 49 thousand of them being destroyed.

At the same time, the progress of this project has been made possible 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. Japan, based on the destruction plan beyond 2016, continues to exert its greatest possible efforts for further progress, with the appropriate and sincere cooperation of China.

In order to promote a good and deep understanding of this project, a panel exhibition dedicated to the project will be held in the lobby during this session. We would like to invite you to observe it. We are also going to host a side event in the same lobby at 6 p.m. on 28 November after the conference, and look forward to seeing many of you there.

Finally, I conclude my statement by reassuring you of our delegation's full support and cooperation to ensure the success of this session.

I thank you for your attention.

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