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JAPAN

**STATEMENT BY H.E. MR MASARU TSUJI
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JAPAN TO THE OPCW
AT THE SEVENTY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

Let me begin by welcoming you, Ambassador Moerzinger, back to the Chair of the Executive Council. We are confident that, under your able leadership, this session of the Council will produce substantial progress. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

I would like to thank to the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat for their continuous efforts for the successful work of this Organisation.

We believe it important to eliminate the Syrian chemical weapons materials as soon as possible in order to address the very serious issue of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. Japan, has urged the Syrian Arab Republic's Government many times to discharge its responsibilities under the Convention as soon as possible. Faced with this unprecedented challenge of the destruction of chemical weapons under the volatile security situation, the international community, especially in the framework of the Convention, started to tackle this challenge by extending very substantial assistance, both in financial and in-kind contributions. Though the process of destruction has been delayed and it did not meet the time frame set by relevant Executive Council decisions, we could see some progress in completing the removal of the chemical weapons materials initially declared from the Syrian territory.

Japan welcomes this progress and commends the Technical Secretariat and the OPCW-UN Joint Mission for their professionalism and for their efforts to bring forward the process despite the challenges. Japan also highly appreciates the efforts of the international community to assist in this process.

There remains a lot to be done, however, for the complete destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons. I will mention a few of the major remaining tasks.

First, the chemical weapons production facilities in the Syrian Arab Republic should be physically destroyed in full compliance with the provisions of the Convention. In order for the Executive Council to make a decision about the destruction modalities, it is essential that the consultation among interested parties on the proposal should be completed as soon as possible with full transparency.



Second, is the issue of the initial declaration by the Syrian Arab Republic. As we have seen in the report by the Technical Secretariat, it is essential that any questions regarding the accuracy and completeness of the initial declaration must be clearly addressed for obtaining the confidence of the international community. Japan, therefore, supports the activities of the Secretariat to streamline and complete the data regarding the initial declaration and hopes that the Secretariat will continue its efforts in addressing the issue for clearing away any remaining doubts of the members of this Council.

Third, is the alleged use of toxic chemicals including chlorine. We are very much concerned about the report of the Fact-Finding Mission that the information that was available to the Mission lends credence to the view that toxic chemicals—most likely pulmonary irritating agents, such as chlorine—have been used in a systematic manner in a number of attacks in the Syrian Arab Republic. The Council needs to remain very attentive of this issue and Japan supports the Director-General in continuing the work of the Fact-Finding Mission in this regard for possible future action by this Organisation. Japan will keep monitoring the progress closely.

Until all these important issues are resolved, we believe that the Executive Council should remain fully engaged in this matter of the destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons. During this session of the Executive Council the Council needs to continue deliberations on how best we can discharge our responsibility, taking into account the overall report on the issue submitted by the Director-General to this Council session.

Turning to other major issues in front of us, first, on the issue of universality. For preventing the possible use of chemical weapons in the future, it is essential for us to strengthen the efforts for the enlargement of membership, and the universality of the Convention. Especially, under the current international security situation, the risk of proliferation of chemical weapons to non-state actors remains high. Japan appreciates the efforts by the Secretariat to promote the universality of the Convention, and believes that further efforts need to be made both by the Secretariat and the States Parties to encourage and assist States not Party to join the Convention. Japan will do its part by providing technical assistance, including sharing experiences, to States not party, especially in the Asian region, in order to build the capacity necessary to implement the Convention.

On the new budget. On 4 July, the programme and budget for 2015 was presented by the Director-General. Under the current severe international economic situation, every government, including Japan's, has been making utmost efforts to streamline programmes and budgets. This obligation should not be an exception. Japan strongly believes it essential to maintain an efficient and effective budget within the limited resources with clear prioritisation on matters assigned to the Secretariat.

The subject of abandoned chemical weapons (ACW) is one of the most important commitments of Japan under the Convention. Japan has been making utmost efforts to destroy ACWs in China in accordance with the decision at the Sixty-Seventh Session of the Executive Council. Japan has invested enormous resources in the ACW destruction projects and these projects have been making steady progress. For example, in Harbaling, the construction of the destruction related buildings are under way with the target to start the test destruction by the end of this year. In Wuhan where the Mobile Destruction Facility (MDF) has been installed, the preparatory work for the destruction site will be completed in September, and bilateral coordination is under way regarding the transportation of the ACWs

to be destroyed at the facility. Concerning the MDF in Shijiazhuang, transportation of the ACWs from the warehouses in the neighboring areas has started. As soon as the transportation is completed, the destruction process will be resumed. The projects have achieved significant progress despite the challenges and uncertainties. For the sake of full transparency, Japan considers it important to provide the Council with updates on the progress made in the ACW destruction projects. My delegation will give a detailed explanation on the progress at the time appointed for that in this Executive Council Session.

The steady progress of the ACW projects has been made with the valuable on-site cooperation extended by the Government of China. We would like to emphasise that the unprecedented and extremely challenging projects can only be carried out through close coordination and cooperation between Japan and China. In this respect, Japan reaffirms its commitment to continue its fullest possible efforts to bring the projects forward with the cooperation of the Government of China.

Lastly, I would like to reiterate our deep appreciation for all your efforts and dedication. I would also like to request that this statement be circulated as an official document of this session of the Council.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

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