



Eighty-Third Session
11 – 14 October 2016

EC-83/NAT.11
11 October 2016
ENGLISH only

JAPAN

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR HIROSHI INOMATA
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JAPAN TO THE OPCW AT THE
EIGHTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Madam Chairperson,
Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,

Let me begin by joining previous speakers in commending your able leadership as the Chairperson of the Executive Council, Ambassador Mrs Odette Melono. We are convinced that this session of the Council will make substantial progress under your guidance.

Let me start with the significant progress on the destruction of chemical weapons in Libya.

We must definitely prevent chemical weapons and toxic chemicals falling into the hands of non-State actors and terrorists. From this perspective, we welcome that Libya's Category 2 chemical weapons have been successfully removed outside Libya on 27 August 2016. We appreciate the efforts by the OPCW, Libya and the related States Parties providing supports.

Our government continues to pay great attention to the situation related to the chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Needless to say, the use of chemical weapons cannot be allowed by anyone under any circumstances or for any reason. Although the international community has addressed the issue with a strong sense of urgency, chemical weapons have been continuously used. We are deeply concerned about the current situation and condemn it as a challenge to the regime of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Japan fully supports the work of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) and expresses serious concern over the use of chemical weapons confirmed by the reports. According to the conclusion of the third report of the JIM, chemical weapons were used by the Syrian Arab Armed Forces in the two locations and by the so-called "Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant" (ISIL) in one location in the Syrian Arab Republic. Japan condemns in the strongest possible terms the use of chemical weapons and violation against the Convention. From this perspective, Japan supports the draft decision proposed by the United States of America. Those who are responsible for the use of chemical weapons should be identified and brought to justice to prevent recurrence.

The circumstances surrounding the OPCW has been changing dramatically, such as the continuous use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, including threats of non-State actors, and progress on the destruction of stockpile chemical weapons by possessor States. To ensure that the OPCW, based on achievements to date, continues to discharge its important responsibility under the Convention while adapting to such a changing international security environment, we believe it is timely to start consideration and discussion on the future direction of the Convention and the OPCW. In this regard, we would like to reaffirm the importance of our efforts through the Open-Ended Working Group on Future Priority, of which the first meeting was held last September. We also appreciate the initiative taken by the Ambassador of Canada and the Ambassador of South Africa as the Co-Chairpersons of the OEWG-FP in setting up a clear framework of deliberation.

In this connection, we would like to stress the importance of further promoting the universality of the Convention and enhancing the effectiveness of the Convention, in particular promoting the national implementation. It is indispensable and mandatory for all States Parties to establish and strengthen their national implementation system. In order to make the legislation work, various efforts such as capacity building of personnel for National Authorities are essential. Moreover, the OPCW needs to maintain and strengthen capabilities for promptly responding to the need of the challenge inspections and contingency operations. Japan will continue to actively participate in this process.

Let me touch upon financial issues. We welcome the consensus that was substantially achieved at the budget consultations on the draft Programme and Budget for 2017 to be submitted to this session of the Council. We appreciate the efforts by the Secretariat and the facilitators.

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 its important role in the future. In this context, we States Parties agreed on increasing the level of the Working Capital Fund by transferring the projected savings from the ERP special Fund and leaving assessed contributions at the 2016 level for 2017 in spite of the severe economic situation. Japan strongly believes that it is essential to maintain an efficient and effective budget within the limited resources without increasing the total budget. It is also important to constantly review the prioritisation among various programmes in the annual budget processes.

In this context, we express our serious concern over the issue of the non-payment of assessed annual contributions and reimbursements which aggravates the financial situation of the OPCW. Needless to say, non-payment of both huge amounts of assessed annual contributions and reimbursements have a serious influence on the stability and predictability of the financial situation of the OPCW. Therefore, we would like to strongly urge the States Parties concerned to pay their outstanding balances as quickly as possible as the most fundamental obligation under the Convention.

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.

Let me stress that 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.

In order to promote a good understanding by the Council of the ACW destruction projects and ensure the transparency on these important projects, Japan continues to update the Council on the ACW projects. My delegation will give a detailed briefing on the progress made under the relevant agenda at this session.

With regard to 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, dated 15 February 2012), 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 Council at the last session, the respective ACW offices of Japan and China are discussing the work plan beyond 2016. We will report the progress to the 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 cooperation of China.

Finally, Madam Chairperson, 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.

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