



OPCW

Executive Council

Eighty-Fourth Session
7 – 9 March 2017

EC-84/NAT.17
7 March 2017
ENGLISH only

JAPAN

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

Madam Chairperson,
Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,

Let me begin by welcoming you back, Ambassador Mrs Odette Melono, as the Chairperson of the Executive Council. We are confident that, under your able leadership, this session of the Council will make substantial progress. I assure you of my delegation's fullest support and cooperation.

This year 2017 marks the 20th anniversary since the OPCW was established. Our continued efforts to achieve the complete destruction of all chemical weapons have become increasingly important. Last month, the Government of Malaysia revealed that chemical weapons were used in an incident. Japan, which had suffered from chemical terrorism attacks, categorically rejects any use of chemical weapons under any circumstances. It is of great importance for the international community to show the determination for achieving a world free of chemical weapons.

In view of the ultimate objective of the Convention, the issue of the chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic remains one of the highest priorities for the OPCW and the international community.

Needless to say, the use of chemical weapons cannot be allowed by anyone under any circumstances or for any reason. Particularly, the current situation where chemical weapons have been continuously used in the Syrian Arab Republic, despite a strong condemnation of the international community, poses a serious challenge to the global norms of prohibiting the use of chemical weapons.

Japan fully supports the work of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), and welcomes the one-year extension of its mandate by the United Nations Security Council. It is of great importance to promote cooperation for identifying those who are responsible for the use of chemical weapons and bringing them to justice. Unfortunately, however, there seems to be no notable progress on this aspect. Japan would like to exert utmost efforts to facilitate the cooperation between the related parties in order to overcome the challenges ahead.



In addition, on the initial declaration by the Syrian Arab Republic, it is regrettable that no notable progress was made and it still indicates serious discrepancies and a lack of accuracy and completeness. We would, once again, like to urge the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to cooperate more fully with the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) to fulfil its obligation under the Convention, by resolving all remaining issues, including declarations of all remaining relevant parts of the Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC) required by the Technical Secretariat.

Furthermore, although we noted that the first inspection at the SSRC, which was decided at the Eighty-Third session of the Council, has been conducted, we would like to urge the Syrian Arab Republic to accelerate its efforts with the Technical Secretariat to ensure the implementation of the decision of the Council.

The circumstances surrounding the OPCW have been changing dramatically, such as the continuous use of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals as chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, increased threats of non-State actors, as well as progress on the destruction of stockpiles by possessor States. Considering the Forth Review Conference which will be held next year, we believe this year is a critical period to engage ourselves in consideration and discussion on the future direction including the roles and functions of the OPCW.

In this regard, the active discussions between States Parties have been taking place at several platforms, such as the Open-Ended Working Group on Future Priorities. The Technical Secretariat is also actively advancing new efforts, such as the Rapid Reaction and Assistance Mission (RRAM), to make full use of the existing assets. We highly appreciate the Technical Secretariat for its initiative. Japan will also continue to actively participate in this process to contribute to the efforts of the OPCW and the international community.

In this connection, Japan is of the view that the OPCW should pay special attention to preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons among its future priorities, and it requires further strengthening of the effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

First, we wish to reiterate our firm conviction that the most important and most effective measure to prevent re-emergence of chemical weapons is promotion of national implementation measures. Therefore, we note with concern that only about 60% of the States Parties have established a national legislation that covers all initial measures, and fully complied with the Convention. We would like to stress that it is indispensable and mandatory for all States Parties to establish and strengthen their national implementation system. Moreover, in order to make the legislation really work, various efforts, including capacity building of personnel for National Authorities, are essential. Given the situation, the highest priority should be to focus on further promotion of national implementation measures in order to ensure the credibility of the Convention.

Second, the OPCW needs to maintain and strengthen capabilities for prompt and appropriate response in contingency operations, including non-routine inspections such as challenge inspections in the future. It is also important to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of industry inspections.

Third, organisational issues should be considered for better cost-benefit and institutional memory. From that perspective, we believe the tenure policy should be reviewed and considered open-mindedly.

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 utmost efforts to destroy ACWs in China, by investing enormous resources, both financial and technical, in the ACW destruction project. Let me also stress that the progress of the ACW project has been made with the valuable on-site joint efforts by Japan and China, in which each country bears the responsibility for its own role. I would like to underline that, without the constructive cooperation and close coordination between Japan and China, this unprecedented difficult project could not have been carried out.

With regard to the ACW destruction with the mobile destruction facilities (MDF) annexed to the decision of the Sixty-Seventh Session of the Executive Council (EC-67/DEC.6, dated 15 February 2012), more than 87% of the ACWs declared to the OPCW by Japan as of 29 April 2012 have been destroyed to date.

As a result of intensive consultations between Japan and China regarding the destruction plan beyond 2016, Japan and China have reached an agreement on this issue, and submitted to this session of the Executive Council a joint national paper as an annex to the abovementioned decision (EC-67/DEC.6). Japan reaffirms its sincere and firm commitment to continue to exert the greatest possible effort for further progress, with a view to achieving the proposed time frame, which is preferably within the year 2022, for the completion of destruction of ACWs with the appropriate and sincere cooperation of China.

In order to promote a good understanding of the Council on the ACW destruction project and ensure the transparency of these important works, Japan continues to update the Executive Council on the ACW projects. My delegation will give a detailed briefing on the progress made under the relevant agenda at this session. Further, Japan and China will invite the Director-General and Executive Council delegations to the Haerbaling ACW site in this coming June.

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.

--- 0 ---