



OPCW

Executive Council

Eighty-Fifth Session
11 – 14 July 2017

EC-85/NAT.29
11 July 2017
ENGLISH only

JAPAN

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

Mr Chairperson,
Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,

Let me join with other delegations to congratulate you, Ambassador Sheikh Mohammed Belal, on your assumption as Chairperson of the Executive Council. I also thank the former Chairperson, Ambassador Mrs Odette Melono, for her excellent works at a difficult time. I also appreciate the Director-General for his comprehensive report.

First of all, let me touch upon two important visits by the Executive Council delegations to the destruction facilities respectively in the United States of America (United States) and in China having been conducted since the last session of the Council.

I, myself, attended the visit to the United States as an observer. We extend our sincere appreciation to the United States for having hosted the visit and commend their efforts.

In addition, Japan and China, under the cooperation of the Technical Secretariat, invited the Chairperson of the Council, the Director-General and the Council delegations from 12 to 16 June this year to the Haerbaling ACW site in order to promote a better understanding by States Parties on the project. We are confident that all participants of the visit, through the first-hand information on the progress of the project, could obtain a clearer picture of Japan's serious commitment and the close cooperation between Japan and China. Taking this opportunity, we would like to express our appreciation to China for their cooperation and thank the Chairperson and other distinguished members of the Council who participated in the visit, as well as the Director-General and staff of the Technical Secretariat for their cooperation and understanding.

Next, I turn to the issues related to the chemical weapons in Syria. Despite urgent efforts by the international community, chemical weapons have been continuously used. We are deeply concerned about the current situation, especially regarding the use of chemical weapons on 4 April 2017 in Khan Shaykhun as confirmed by the report of the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM), and we strongly condemn it as a challenge to the Chemical Weapons Convention regime. I would like to reiterate my statement at the Fifty-Fifth Meeting of the Council last week, in which Japan expressed its strong support to the FFM and the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM). I also appreciate the distinguished ambassadors of



France and Germany for their initiative. In order to prevent recurrence, we are confident that it is of great importance to promote the concerted cooperation of the international community in identifying those responsible for the use of chemical weapons and bringing them to justice. Japan would also like to exert utmost efforts to facilitate the cooperation between the related parties in order to overcome the current challenges ahead. On this occasion, Japan wishes to share information on its efforts to support the activities of the JIM, such as the voluntary contributions to the United Nations of approximately one million U.S. dollars in this year.

On the other hand, although we saw certain progress with regard to the destruction of chemical weapons production facilities of the Syrian Arab Republic and noted the report of the first inspection at the Scientific Studies and Research Center (SSRC) required by the decision of the Eighty-Third session of the Council, we would like to urge the Syrian Arab Republic to accelerate its efforts for addressing all the other outstanding issues.

In particular, 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 like to urge the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to fulfil its obligation under the Convention, including declarations of all remaining relevant parts of the SSRC.

Let me touch upon other important issues for the OPCW. On the universality of the Convention, there are only four States that have not ratified or acceded to the Convention, namely Israel, Egypt, South Sudan and North Korea. Japan strongly urges them to join the Convention at the earliest. In this context, Japan appreciates the efforts by the Technical Secretariat to promote the universality of the Convention. We also intend to intensify our efforts to encourage the remaining States not Party to the Convention to join..

On the financial issues, the Programme and Budget for 2018 was presented by the Director-General on 7 July 2017. Japan strongly believes that it is essential to maintain an efficient and effective budget within the limited resources with a clear priority among various programmes. Japan is ready to constructively participate in examination of the details of the budget.

Although the financial situation of the OPCW seems to have been alleviated, the challenges facing the OPCW still remain unchanged. In particular, we note with concern that cash deficits could occur again at the end of this year. Having said that, we also commend the Technical Secretariat for its efforts to improve the situation, such as the expansion of the Working Capital Fund and careful monitoring using a budget tracking mechanism.

It goes without saying that it is essential to maintain a healthy and sustainable financial basis in order to ensure that the OPCW continues to play its important role in the future. In this regard, we express our serious concern over the impact of the non-payment of assessed annual contributions and verification reimbursements. We would also like to urge States Parties concerned to pay their outstanding balances as quickly as possible.

The circumstances surrounding the OPCW have been changing dramatically, such as the progress on the destruction of the stockpiles by possessor States and increased threats of non-State actors, and the candid discussion on the future of the OPCW that is currently taking place. We believe that the leading role which the Director-General plays during such an important period is crucial. We will pay special attention to the presentations by the

candidates for the position of Director-General on 13 July 2017 and look forward to lively discussions with all the candidates.

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 in which Japan has invested around 1.3 billion euros to date. In addition, significant progress has been achieved and approximately 46,000 ACWs have been destroyed. Let me also stress that the progress of the ACW 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 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, Japan and China submitted the destruction plan beyond 2016 to the last session of the Council and it was approved. Japan, based on the new destruction plan, continues to exert the greatest possible effort for further progress, with a view to achieving the proposed timeframe, which is preferably within the year 2022, for the completion of destruction of ACWs with the appropriate and sincere cooperation of China.

My delegation will give a detailed briefing on the progress of the ACW project under the relevant agenda at this session. Thank you.

--- 0 ---