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JAPAN

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

Mr Chairperson,
Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,

On 27 September in this year, which marks the 20th anniversary since the OPCW was established, the completion of the destruction of chemical weapons possessed by the Russian Federation has become one of major milestones for the OPCW. We highly commend all efforts by the Russian Federation, the Technical Secretariat as well as States Parties which supported the efforts.

Furthermore, over 96% of all declared chemical weapon stockpiles have been destroyed under the OPCW verification. This is another sign of steady progress and we also appreciate the efforts by the States Parties concerned including other possessor States.

In this context, we are of the view that further promoting the universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention is of importance for the realisation of a world free of chemical weapons. Japan strongly urges Israel, Egypt, South Sudan and North Korea to join the Convention at the earliest possible time. Japan appreciates the efforts by the Technical Secretariat and reiterates its intention to intensify our efforts to encourage them to join the Convention in order to promote the universality.

Japan expresses grave concern that Schedule 1 nerve agent VX was used in the murder at Kuala Lumpur International Airport 2 in February. It is necessary for the Council to take necessary actions once the Government of Malaysia releases the result of its investigation.

Next, I would like to turn to the issues related to the chemical weapons in Syria.

This issue remains one of the highest priorities for the OPCW and the international community, as the use of chemical weapons in Syria poses a serious challenge to the regime of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Japan consistently and fully supports the work of the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) and the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) for their capabilities, credibility and impartiality.



In order to prevent recurrence, we are confident that it is of great importance to promote concerted cooperation of the international community for identifying those responsible for the use of chemical weapons and bringing them to justice.

Let me touch upon the financial issues.

Japan welcomes the consensus that was substantially achieved through the budget consultations on the draft Programme and Budget for 2018, which is formulated based on the zero-nominal growth principle. We also welcome the draft budget to be submitted to this session of the Council and appreciate the efforts by the Technical Secretariat and the facilitators.

As we stressed on many occasions, 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 context, we States Parties agreed on utilising the cash surplus in 2015 to increase the level of the Working Capital Fund amid the severe economic situation.

Given that the financial situation of the OPCW has been alleviated, we commend the Technical Secretariat for its efforts to improve the situation, such as the expansion of the Working Capital Fund and the careful monitoring using a budget tracking mechanism. At the same time, we express our serious concern over the impact of the non-payment of assessed annual contributions and verification reimbursements and strongly urge States Parties concerned to pay their outstanding balances as soon as possible.

On the appointment of the Director-General, several straw polls have been conducted since the last session of the Council, which is a fair, open and transparent process.

We strongly believe that a decision will be adopted by consensus during this session of the Council for recommending a single candidate to the Conference of the States Parties at its Twenty-Second Session.

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, including financial, technical and human resources, in the ACW destruction project in which Japan has invested around EUR 1.3 billion to date. In addition, significant progress has been achieved and approximately 49 thousand 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 to be implemented by itself. I would also like to underline that, without the close cooperation 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 jointly submitted the destruction plan beyond 2016 to the Eighty-Fourth Session of the Executive Council and it was approved. Japan, based on the new destruction plan, continues to exert the greatest possible effort for further progress, in accordance with 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.

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

I thank you for your attention.

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