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**STATEMENT BY H.E. MR MASARU TSUJI AMBASSADOR OF JAPAN
AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JAPAN TO THE OPCW AT THE
EIGHTEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,
Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,

Allow me, first of all, to congratulate you, Ambassador Sa'ad Abdul Majeed Ibrahim Al-Ali, on your election as Chairperson of this session of the Conference of the States Parties. I am sure that the Conference will be successfully conducted under your able leadership and experienced diplomatic skills. I assure you of my delegation's fullest support and cooperation.

The year 2013 marked a critical juncture for this Organisation.

The number of States Parties to the Convention has increased to 190 in sixteen years after the entry into force of the Convention. Substantial progress has been made toward the destruction of chemical weapons, which is one of the core objectives of the Convention. The Chemical Weapons Convention is said to be the most successful disarmament convention ever. I would like to express my appreciation for the efforts to implement the Convention made by the Technical Secretariat thus far.

We believe that the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the OPCW is in recognition of these efforts of the OPCW to date as well as its work related to the Syrian issue. Japan extends its sincere congratulations to all the States Parties and the Technical Secretariat.

The use or threat of use of chemical weapons is unacceptable under any circumstances. We strongly condemn, once again, the use of chemical weapons in Syria on 21 August of this year.

The Executive Council adopted decisions at its Thirty-Third and Thirty-Fourth Meetings on the timeline of the destruction and its detailed requirements. Since then, progress has been made to implement the decisions. The international community has been working hard on the destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons so that chemical weapons will never be used again. The destruction and verification of the Syrian chemical weapons has posed unprecedented challenges for the Organisation.



Japan highly appreciates the work of the Technical Secretariat under the leadership of the Director-General in dealing with this urgent, important and unprecedented mission in a proper and swift manner. Japan also pays tribute to members of the OPCW-UN Joint Mission who are working in a volatile security environment.

We believe that it is important for all the States Parties and the Technical Secretariat to continue to work together for the implementation of the decisions. As for Japan, we have provided the Secretariat with a list of ex-inspectors who are ready to cooperate in these efforts. We will continue to provide support and the greatest possible cooperation and support towards the international community's endeavour to dispose of the Syrian Arab Republic's chemical weapons.

Now we urge the Syrian regime to implement the relevant Executive Council decisions and the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2118, to secure the safety of the people on the ground and to fully observe the obligations under the Convention in a sincere and thorough manner.

At the Third Review Conference held in April this year, a forward-looking outcome document was adopted by consensus. The final report touches upon the necessity to adapt the Organisation to a changing security environment, and also sets out the future direction of the OPCW. It is important for us to continue to implement what has been addressed in the outcome document.

I would like to stress a couple of points which deserve special attention.

Japan welcomes the efforts being made by the major possessor States to destroy the chemical weapon stockpiles and expects that the decision will continue to be implemented, which will be vitally important for the OPCW.

The Chemical Weapons Convention is one of the most successful conventions in terms of universality. We believe that further efforts should be made for the States not Parties to join the Convention.

On the national implementation, only 57% of States Parties have legislation that covers all initial measures. We should continue to make efforts to improve this situation. To that effect, we have been sharing the experience of our chemical industry by, for example, dispatching experts to regional workshops and by receiving trainees.

Also, in order to enhance the effectiveness of the national implementation, it is vital to raise awareness of the Convention among the industry and academia. Taking this opportunity where the international community has been paying more and more attention towards the Organisation due to the Nobel Peace Prize, we expect that the Technical Secretariat will continue to make the best use of the existing resources in order to enhance awareness.

On the verification regime, my delegation stresses the importance of efficient and effective verification and also accurate, complete and timely declarations under Article VI.

The activities related to the destruction and verification of the Syrian chemical weapons provides us with important suggestions regarding the knowledge management mentioned in the outcome document of the Third Review Conference. It is expected that the Technical

Secretariat continue paying due attention to the knowledge management during the Syrian mission in order to retain the lessons learned.

The abandoned chemical weapons project in China has been making steady and significant progress. Japan is committed to make its fullest possible efforts to destroy ACWs in China, tackling various challenges and uncertainties. Until now, Japan has invested enormous financial and human resources in the destruction of the ACWs. On this ACW project a decision was adopted at the Sixty-Seventh Session of the Executive Council to which the destruction plan jointly reported by Japan and China was attached. Japan reaffirms its commitment to destroy the ACWs in China in a sincere manner in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, and also based on the decision of the Executive Council.

The ACW project entails various challenges. Most ACWs are heavily corroded or deformed since they have remained underground for a long time. Also, since most of the ACWs are found together with other kinds of munitions, it is a difficult task to identify, excavate and recover the ACWs. The excavation, recovery and destruction sites are located in many different areas of China. In some areas, it is difficult to carry out work on the ground during the winter. We also attach the highest priority to the safety of the personnel and the protection of the environment. These are the most important prerequisites to carry out this unprecedented project steadily and safely, which sometimes includes dangerous tasks. Besides, Japan has to implement these projects in a manner consistent with Chinese laws and regulations. We are making continuous efforts to that effect.

The progress of the ACW projects has been made thanks to the valuable on-site cooperation extended by China to Japan. Japan emphasises that the unprecedented and extremely challenging projects cannot be carried out without close coordination and cooperation between Japan and China. In this respect, Japan will continue its fullest possible efforts to move the projects forward with the appropriate cooperation of China.

In southern China, the destruction operation in Nanjing was completed in June 2012, having destroyed 35,681 munitions. Preparations are going on in order to deploy the mobile destruction facility in Wuhan. In northern China, destruction operations started in Shijiazhuang in December 2012. Since then, 1,383 munitions have been destroyed.

In Haerbaling, the biggest ACW burial site, the excavation and recovery operations were started in December 2012. Currently, buildings to house the destruction units are under construction. In addition to the destruction operations and the preparatory works, Japan has been carrying out on-site investigations, excavation and recovery operations of the newly discovered ACWs in various areas in China.

Japan and China received the Executive Council representatives at the ACW site in Haerbaling from 9 – 13 September of this year. Through the first-hand information the participants had during the visit, we are confident that this visit further promoted a good understanding of the current situation of the site, the progress of the ACW projects and also of the cooperation between Japan and China.

In order to promote correct understanding and to enhance fullest possible transparency, a photo and video exhibition on the ACW project is being held here at the World Forum. I would like to take this opportunity to invite all delegates to visit the exposition.

Japan has been working for the destruction of the ACWs in China in the most sincere manner. But Japan alone cannot advance this whole project. We can never overemphasise that the 'appropriate cooperation' by China is indispensable for the future conduct of the ACW project. We are determined to continue to make our fullest possible efforts to destroy all the ACWs in China in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, and also based on the decision of the Executive Council, ensuring the transparency of this project.

Mr Chairperson,

Japan welcomes that the recommendation for the renewal of the appointment of the Director-General has been approved at the Seventy-Fourth Session of the Executive Council. The Director-General has guided this Organisation with his able leadership in this challenging period for the Organisation. Japan highly appreciates his leadership and we express our support to the Director-General for the renewal of the appointment. I am confident that it will be approved at this Session of the Conference.

To conclude, I would like to assure you, Mr. Chairperson, once again of the fullest support of my delegation to a successful conduct of the Conference. I would also like to request that this statement be circulated as an official document of this session of the Conference.

Thank you.

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