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**THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA**

**POSITION PAPER: CHALLENGE INSPECTION**

1. Challenge inspection is an important and unique verification tool of the verification system of the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter “the Convention”). In contrast with other means of verification, challenge inspection will be directed at exceptional circumstances, require unusual starting procedures, and have special political ramifications. Whether a challenge inspection is applied rightly and justifiably and whether an abuse can be effectively prevented or otherwise penalised will have a significant impact on the authority and effectiveness of the Convention, and also on confidence and cooperation among States Parties.
2. While specifying the relevant procedures for challenge inspections, Article IX of the Convention encourages States Parties to resolve their concerns about non-compliance through consultation, clarification and cooperation (hereinafter “the 3C mechanism”). It is a proven fact that effective application of the 3C mechanism will help clarify facts and verify compliance, thereby serving the same purposes as the other means of verification under the Convention; and will at the same time enhance mutual understanding, cooperation and confidence among States Parties by avoiding possible political ramifications. In view of this and considering the special nature of challenge inspections, States Parties should, whenever possible, first make every effort to use the 3C mechanism to resolve their concerns before requesting a challenge inspection.
3. It is an act in violation of the Convention to abuse the right to request a challenge inspection. As it will seriously damage the authority of the Convention and its verification system and undermine confidence among States Parties and their support for the Convention, such a move must be resolutely forestalled. Once abuse has occurred, there should be a penalty. In order to effectively deter, prevent and penalise abuse, it is essential that States Parties develop a wide-spread political consensus and send out unanimous signals.
4. To date, some important issues related to challenge inspections still remain unresolved, including inspection notification format, inspection equipment, and punishment of abuse. These issues have significant impact on the conduct of challenge inspections and should be properly resolved as soon as possible.



5. In recent years, the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW has been holding various training courses, exercises and workshops to strengthen capacity building for the conduct of challenge inspections. China is ready to continue to participate in such activities, and hopes that these activities will be open, transparent and involve more States Parties.

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