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POSITION PAPER: VERIFICATION ISSUES

1. The verification system established under the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter “the Convention”) is a key instrument in overseeing and ensuring the full and effective implementation of the object and purpose of the Convention. It is also an important platform for confidence-building among States Parties.
2. As of February 2008, the Technical Secretariat of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) had successfully completed more than 3,100 on-site inspections at chemical weapons-related facilities, scheduled chemical facilities, and other chemical production facilities (OCPFs). In the meantime, States Parties and the Technical Secretariat have been engaged in close consultations and tentative steps towards the optimisation of inspection methods and the rational allocation of inspection resources, and have made some headway in this process. Generally speaking, the verification system is both effective and viable.
3. In the coming years, more chemical weapons destruction facilities will be put into operation and destruction campaigns will be unfolding on an even larger scale for realising the core objective of the Convention of destroying chemical weapons. With scientific and technological advances and economic globalisation as the driving forces, chemical industry has undergone transformations in terms of technology, structure and scale of production, as well as changes in its geographical distribution. The rational utilisation of new verification technologies is of positive significance for enhancing the efficiency of inspections. It is necessary for States Parties to try to find, through extensive discussions, ways to allocate inspection resources in a more rational manner, improve the effectiveness of inspections, and develop practical and effective inspection measures in line with the Convention.
4. As the State Party with the largest number of declared and inspectable facilities, China has always actively supported the verification regime under the Convention and has taken a constructive and pragmatic approach in discussions with a view to improving the verification system. China wishes hereby to reiterate some of its views on verification:
 - (a) The thorough elimination of the threat of chemical weapons is the core objective of the Convention. Rigorous and effective monitoring at chemical weapons-related facilities, especially destruction facilities, constitutes the



central task and primary objective for verification. All human, financial, equipment and other resources should be allocated in a rational manner to give priority to ensuring systematic verification of the destruction facilities for chemical weapons stockpiles. In any attempt at optimising inspection methods and saving inspection resources, effectiveness of verification can by no means be impaired as a trade-off.

- (b) Ensuring the peaceful purposes of scheduled chemical facilities and related activities is an important element of the Convention. The risk posed by Schedule 1, 2, and 3 facilities decreases in that order, thus the intensity, frequency, and duration of inspections for these facilities should also reduce in the same order. The scheduled chemical facilities are large in number and uneven in geographical distribution. With the introduction of on-site analysis during Schedule 2 inspections, verification will become increasingly thorough. In order to ensure the effectiveness of verification, it is essential that available resources be allocated in a rational manner according to the risk level of facilities posed to the Convention, while giving due regard to geographical balance. The important outstanding issue such as risk assessment and inspection frequency should be properly resolved as soon as possible.
- (c) OCPFs, largest in number with extremely uneven geographical distribution, pose the lowest risk to the Convention. These characteristics should be taken into full consideration by States Parties in their discussions leading to any decision on the number of inspections for OCPFs. As for the distribution of inspections and the site-selection methodology, any adjustment should be in accordance with the provisions of the Convention and the principle of “objectivity, rationality, and impartiality”, and should only be introduced by consensus based on full consultations among States Parties.