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STATEMENT BY TOSHIO SANO
AMBASSADOR OF JAPAN
TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT
AT THE FIRST COMMITTEE OF THE 71TH SESSION
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- THEMATIC DEBATE: OTHER WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION -
18 OCTOBER 2016, NEW YORK

Mr. Chairman,

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) has significantly contributed to international security through the destruction of chemical weapon in an effective and verifiable manner. We praise the continued efforts made by the major chemical weapon possessor states for the destruction of their stockpiles. With the verifiable destruction of more than 90% of all declared stockpiles, the destruction of chemical weapons still remains the core objective of the Convention pending its completion.

It is essential to strengthen efforts to accelerate the implementation of national measures for preventing the re-emergence and proliferation of chemical weapons. In Particular, the increased threat caused by non-State actors including terrorists, is becoming an imminent issue. We must definitely prevent chemical weapons and toxic chemicals from falling into the wrong hands.

It is also important to combine our efforts towards the universalization of the Convention. Japan will continue to provide expertise and technical assistance to facilitate non-member States to join the Convention. We encourage the remaining four non-member States to reconsider their position, and overcome their internal barriers with a view to early accession.

Mr. Chairman,

The use of chemical weapons is not permissible under any circumstances. After a serious and independent investigation, the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) concluded that the Government of Syrian Arab Republic used chemical weapons in two locations, and ISIL conducted mustard gas attack in Aleppo. Japan condemns, in the strongest terms, the use of chemical weapons by any actor, as well as the violation of the CWC by a State Party to the Convention.

We have repeatedly insisted that holding those responsible to account is crucial. Japan is ready to work in the Security Council to this end, and will make the necessary contributions to find a way to prevent any further use of chemical weapons in Syria.

Japan welcomes the successful removal of all category 2 chemical weapons from Libya on 27th August, and commends the work of the Libyan authorities and the contribution made by the OPCW and relevant

countries.

Mr. Chairman,

Japan has invested as much human and financial resources as possible for fulfilling the obligations under the CWC, which is to destroy abandoned chemical weapons (ACWs) in China. Although ACWs projects entail various challenges and uncertainties, the projects have been making consistent progress.

In Haerbaling, the largest burial site of ACWs in Jilin Province for example, the test destruction and excavation operations are actively proceeding, with a view to completing the destruction by 2022. With regard to the destruction plan of ACWs with the mobile facilities, which was agreed in the Annex to the decision of the 67th Session of the Council, approximately 87% of the ACWs declared to the OPCW by Japan in 2012 have been destroyed. At the same time, the challenging situations compel us to conclude that the completion of destruction process of all such declared ACWs may go beyond this timeframe. The respective ACW offices of Japan and China have started consultations on a future work plan beyond 2016.

Japan reaffirms its commitment to continue its fullest possible efforts to advance its projects with the cooperation of the people and the government of China. Only through such coordination and cooperation, those

unprecedented and extremely challenging projects can be carried out.

Mr. Chairman,

With regard to the 8th Review Conference of the BWC in November, Japan is determined to align with States Parties and commits itself to reach agreements to strengthen the BWC based on the deliberation we have had during the intercessional process. Japan commends Ambassador Molnár of Hungary, the President-Designate, for his active engagement in the preparation for the Review Conference.

During the conference, we would like to focus on a few points from our national perspective, such as review of the intercessional process, improvement of the scientific and technological development review framework, strengthening national implementation and promotion of collaboration with international organizations.

We also stress the importance of universalizing the Convention. We welcome the recent accession of Angola and strongly encourage other non-member states to follow. Japan, together with relevant international organizations, academia and research institutes, is ready to provide any possible cooperation and assistance related to the BWC for the State Parties in need.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.