

**The 106th Session of the Executive Council of
the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)
General Debate**

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Hyoung-chan Choe
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the OPCW**

9 July, 2024, The Hague

Mr. Chair,
Mr. Director-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

First of all, I would like to congratulate Ambassador Andrés Terán Parral on assuming the Chairpersonship of the Executive Council. You can count on my delegation's full support and cooperation. I would also like to thank Ambassador Lucian Fatu for his successful leadership as Chairperson for the past year.

My deepest gratitude goes also to Director-General Fernando Arias and all the staff members of the Technical Secretariat (TS) for their continued efforts to make the world free of chemical weapons despite the very challenging circumstances.

Mr. Chair,

It has been more than 10 years since the Syrian Arab Republic joined the CWC, but Syrian chemical weapons issue still remains a source of grave concern. We note that three outstanding issues have been resolved this year, and the 27th round of consultations between the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) and the Syrian authority was held in May. Nevertheless, it is regrettable that the declaration submitted by Syria still cannot be considered accurate and complete considering the identified gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies that remain unresolved. We strongly urge Syria to fully cooperate with the TS to resolve outstanding issues and to comply with the Convention.

My delegation express appreciation for the tireless efforts by the TS to ensure Syria's compliance with the Convention. We also reaffirm our unwavering support for the transparent, independent and professional work of the OPCW teams including the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT), the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM), and the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT). The Republic of Korea would like to reiterate that chemical weapons must never be used again by anyone, anywhere, at any time,

under any circumstance, and those responsible for the use of chemical weapons must be held accountable.

Mr. Chair,

More than two years have passed since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which not only causes large-scale human suffering and destruction, but also poses serious threats to global security. In particular, the possible use of RCAs by Russian armed forces against Ukrainian armed forces, which has been reported in the Russian media, is of grave concern to all of us. Any use of chemical weapons, including the use of riot control agents as a method of warfare, is prohibited under the Article I of the Convention.

In this regard, we take note that the Secretariat made a Technical Assistance Visit to Ukraine last week to deliver non-military protection and detection equipment and to provide appropriate training. My delegation commends the TS for this effort and encourages it to continue to monitor the situation in Ukraine and to maintain its readiness for further engagement.

Mr. Chair,

Scientific and technological advances including Artificial Intelligence (AI) can bring valuable opportunities to effectively implement the Convention, but such advances could also be exploited for the potential re-emergence of the use of chemical weapons. In this context, the ROK welcomes the continued expansion and development of the ChemTech Center's activities since its inauguration in May 2023.

We also express support for the DG's initiatives on AI including the upcoming Global AI Conference which will be held in Morocco in October. This meeting will be a meaningful platform to discuss opportunities and challenges AI can bring for the implementation of the Convention. I am pleased to announce that my government has decided to provide voluntary financial contribution to this event. Moreover, my delegation would like to encourage the TS to further strengthen its technical and professional capabilities to address current and future challenges associated with emerging disruptive technologies

Mr. Chair,

The Republic of Korea welcomes the adoption of the Decision on the OPCW Tenure Policy at the last CSP, which will enable the TS to more flexibly use its human resources and ensure vital knowledge retention. We also supports the last CSP Decision entitled Action Plan on Geographical Representation which will create a more diverse and inclusive environment within the Organisation. We look forward to the continued implementation of these essential plans.

My delegation also welcomes the ongoing discussions on strengthening engagement with civil society led by Germany and Costa Rica. Given its expertise in the chemical-related field and fast evolving technology including AI, there is a need for the OPCW to deepen its partnership with scientists, academia and other experts and to muster their collective wisdom. We look forward to the consultation providing a good opportunity to devise concrete ways to strengthen the cooperation with civil society.

Mr. Chair,

Last but not least, the Korean government reiterates the significance of universality of the Convention. Today, 193 States have committed to the CWC, but we can be assured all chemical arsenals have been declared and destroyed only when the States outside the Convention accede to the CWC and take on its responsibility accordingly. In this context, we urge the four remaining States not Party, including the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), to join the Convention as early as possible without preconditions. We encourage the TS to continue to engage with States not Party to the Convention to be prepared for potential new membership in the future.

I request that this statement be circulated as an official document of this Executive Council Session and be published on the OPCW website and external server.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. /END/