

**The 107th Session of the Executive Council of  
the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)  
General Debate  
Statement by Ms. Hyejeong Ahn  
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**8 October, 2024, The Hague**

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

At the outset, I would like to express my appreciation to Chairperson Ambassador Andrés Terán Parral for his leadership in preparing for the 107<sup>th</sup> Session of the Executive Council. My gratitude goes also to Director-General Fernando Arias and all the staff members of the Technical Secretariat (TS) for their continued efforts to fully implement their mandates under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

Mr. Chair,

The war of aggression against Ukraine has persisted for over two and a half years, and continues to pose threats to global security. This conflict raises significant concerns, particularly regarding the alleged misuse of toxic chemicals, including the possible use of riot control agents (RCAs) as a method of warfare. We are deeply troubled by recent Russian media reports showing the use of chemical weapons by Russian armed forces against Ukrainian armed forces. 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 respect, we take note that the Secretariat made two Technical Assistance Visits to Ukraine in July and September of this year to deliver non-military protection and detection equipment and 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,

The Republic of Korea expresses grave concerns over the Syrian chemical weapons issue, which has been unresolved for more than a decade. The declaration submitted by Syria still cannot be considered accurate and complete considering the identified gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies that remain unresolved. It is also disappointing that two new outstanding issues were opened in July 2024. We note that the 28<sup>th</sup> round of consultations between the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) and Syria was held last month, and strongly urge Syria to provide comprehensive information and fully cooperate with the TS to resolve all remaining outstanding issues and to comply with the Convention.

The Korean government reaffirms its unwavering support for the transparent, independent and professional work of the OPCW Syria teams including the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT), the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM), and the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT). In particular, given the repeated use of chemical weapons by government forces and non-state actors in Syria, we strongly support the work of the IIT, which identifies the perpetrators of specific instances of chemical weapons use, and we oppose any attempts to undermine its legitimacy. We reiterate that chemical weapons must never be used by anyone, anywhere, at any time, under any circumstances, and those responsible for the use of chemical weapons must be held accountable.

Mr. Chair

Science and technology advances present both challenges and opportunities for the implementation of the CWC. On one hand, they can increase the risk of potential re-emergence of chemical weapons, even after decades of global efforts to eliminate them. On the other hand, these advances can enhance our capacity to effectively implement the Convention. In this regard, the ROK welcomes the decision by the EC-106 to include emerging technologies on the agenda of all future regular EC sessions.

We also express appreciation to the Secretariat and the Kingdom of Morocco for hosting the Global AI Conference which will be held in Rabat, Morocco in two weeks (22-24 October, 2024). The Republic of Korea is pleased to contribute financially to the Conference. We believe this conference will be a meaningful occasion to facilitate a comprehensive understanding of AI's role in implementing CWC. We look forward to its success.

Mr. Chair,

Regional cooperation in chemical safety and security can greatly enhance the goals of the CWC by fostering collaboration among States Parties and facilitating the exchange of best practices. Since 2012, the Republic of Korea has been hosting the annual Seoul Workshops together with the TS to promote peaceful use of chemistry in the Asian region. We look forward that this year's Seoul Workshop, scheduled from 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> of this November, will provide valuable platform to strengthen regional capabilities.

Korea welcomes the draft revised Programme and Budget for 2025 and expresses its appreciation to the Secretariat and facilitators for their efforts in preparing the draft. We acknowledge that the TS requires adequate resources to carry out its work effectively, and we especially agree on the importance of creating a physically secure environment, including the strengthening of building security.

Last but not least, the Korean government reiterates the significance of universality of the Convention. 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 regard, 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. /END/