



JAPAN

POSSIBLE WAYS FOR PREVENTION OF RE-EMERGENCE OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS

I. Background

1. Last December Japan celebrated the 20 year anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter “the Convention”) and the establishment of the Organisation for Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (hereinafter “the OPCW”) by organising an event in Tokyo, which informed about the Convention’s roles and achievements. In this event, Japan expressed its commitments to further efforts and cooperation with international community for realising a world free of chemical weapons.
2. Japan is of the view that this milestone comes alongside a new stage. Over the last 20 years, the disarmament of chemical weapons has steadily progressed and the international community has continued its efforts for non-proliferation of weapons of mass destructions including chemical weapons through the implementation of global and regional arrangements and measures such as United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540. Japan especially welcomes the unequivocal commitment and the tireless efforts made by the chemical weapons possessor States for the destruction of their stockpiles. With progress of the destruction of declared chemical weapons, States Parties should put their efforts to the prevention of the re-emergence of chemical weapons.
3. In this regard, despite the progress of chemical weapons destruction, it is regrettable that we have witnessed the catastrophic loss of life resulting from actual uses of chemical weapons in recent years. This put serious threat to the credibility of the Convention and the use or re-emergence of chemical weapons has become significant and urgent issue more than ever. The use of chemical weapons cannot be allowed under any circumstances and it is now an important task for the States Parties to consider means to prevent further recurrence.
4. With this background, Japan is of the view that the followings efforts should be made for the prevention of the re-emergence of chemical weapons and all the states parties should cooperate in these efforts for the realisation of the object and purpose of the Convention.



II. Universality

5. The number of States Parties to the Convention has increased to 193, including 5 States Parties which have joined the Convention since the Third Review Conference. It is an achievement that the Convention has been acceded by so many countries during the last year or so in twenty years, and the efforts for the universality of the Convention, particularly made by the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter “the Secretariat”), should be commended. Efforts to induce the remaining States not Parties to accede to the Convention should be continued to prevent further proliferation of chemical weapons.

III. Enhancing National Implementation

6. Effective implementation of the Convention for preventing the re-emergence and use of chemical weapons by States and non-state actors requires full national implementation by all States Parties. States Parties whose national implementation are not sufficient might create loopholes for the proliferation of materials and technologies related to chemical weapons, and be targeted as a hub of malicious activities by the states of concern or non-state actors. The strict national implementation is a safeguard that the sensitive scheduled chemicals are not converted into chemical weapons by its organisations of concern within its territory or in the countries of destination of re-exportation. If the national implementation measures are legislated in the developing states, those states would acquire the confidence among trade and investment partners, and thereby it contributes to the further economic growth in the developing states. In short, we should raise awareness that the reinforcement of trustworthy national implementation system not only ensures the prevention of the re-emergence and non-use of chemical weapons, but is also the wise investment in the further economic development in the future.
7. To assist developing states in implementing national measures, technical assistance such as providing their knowledge and experiences by other States Parties and the Secretariat to the States Parties being in need of support continues to play a key role. In providing assistance, a tailor-made approach should be considered to take into account the circumstances of each country and region. Japan recently organised a seminar regarding national implementation in Indonesia in 2017 and continues to assist States Parties in need.

IV. Capacity Building

8. National implementation of the Convention is closely related to national capacity building and skills development, particularly in the area of Article VI verification regime. In this regard, capacity building of personnel in charge of submitting declarations, receiving inspections and escorting an inspection team should be given priority for assistance. At the same time, as international transfer of chemical materials is on increase, assistance for strengthening trade control through capacity building is becoming increasingly important. Since the Third Review Conference, Japan has been providing assistance in this area; industrial training for the OPCW Associate Programme, and the annual Asian Export Control Seminar with the objective of enhancing common recognition among Asian countries on export control. Under the Associate Programme, Japan has been accepting trainees from Asian

nations with a rapidly-growing chemical industry to our industrial facilities since 2004 and the Asian Export Control Seminar in 2018 gathered around 220 participants from many countries/regions, international organisations and others.

V. Optimization of Verification

9. The verification system has played an important role to prevent the re-emergence of chemical weapons and confidence building among States Parties. Japan believes that States Parties and the Secretariat should make every possible effort to improve the industry verification with a view to achieving maximum results with minimum costs. In this regard, the continuous discussion on inspection mechanism including site selection methodology, enhancement of declarations and allocation of resources for inspections should be commended. Japan is of the view that in order to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of inspections, risk to the Convention should be taken into account for inspection frequency and site selection, and the problem that there are relevant undeclared facilities should be addressed. To this end, States Parties should be encouraged to submit comprehensive and accurate declaration and the Secretariat's further effort to increase initial declaration of the facilities should be continued.
10. On the other hand, the principle of Article VI needs to be kept in mind in that verification activities have to be implemented without imposing excessive burden to the industry. To improve the verification activities, interaction with the industry continues to be beneficial from the viewpoint of sharing their experience amassed in the past twenties years. Recognition of the core objectives of the Convention and their significance by chemical industry is also vital for smooth implementation of Article VI verification. To this end, Secretariat's further efforts for public diplomacy as well as education and outreach activities are welcomed.

VI. Challenge Inspection

11. Challenge inspection is an indispensable mechanism for the Convention to remain capable of swiftly clarifying questions on non-compliance. This particular mechanism is growing in its importance after we have witnessed use of chemical weapons in recent years. Challenge inspection works as a deterrent against non-compliance. For that deterrent to be effective, the OPCW, particularly the Executive Council and the Secretariat, must stand ready to consider and, when necessary, act upon a request for a challenge inspection at any time. In this regard, the Secretariat has the experience of investigation for past uses of chemical weapons and should maintain the expertise for future inspection of alleged use of chemical weapons. To this end, the list of qualified experts should be updated and maintained constantly from the point of maintaining appropriate expertise and the States Parties should support Secretariat's current efforts to upgrade the OPCW laboratory.

VII. Mechanism of Identifying Perpetrators

12. The use of chemical weapons is a grave violation of the Convention nor permissible under any circumstances. States Parties should be united in condemning its actual use against citizens and once the perpetrators are identified, they must be held accountable. In this regard, Japan welcomes the decision at the Fourth Special Conference of the States Parties of the Convention that the OPCW works for a tool to

identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons, and looks forward to working with other States Parties to put the decision into action.

VIII. Assistance and Protection

13. Japan is of the view that the assistance and protection forms a defense and deterrence against a chemical attack by letting the aggressor know that the damage of the attack will be minimised. The effective provision of assistance and protection in the case of emergency is growing in its importance and the OPCW must maintain and improve its readiness to respond, taking into account the possible use of chemical weapons. In order to coordinate experts with diverse nationalities and expertise and maximise the effect of assistance and protection, it is important to utilize the lessons learnt from the exercises for developing capacities. With the limited resources in mind, the experiences of the OPCW should be exploited for more efficient implementation of the obligations under Article X. In this connection, it is useful to promote cooperation with relevant international organisations.
14. Japan is one of a few countries which experienced an illegal use of chemical agents to a defenseless public. Having experienced Aum Shinrikyo doomsday cult carrying out a sarin gas attack on the subway in Tokyo in 1995, Japan hopes to continue to share with the States Parties the lessons of dealing with this act of terrorism in order to assist their effort in improving preparedness for emergencies involving chemical weapons.

IX. Efficiency of the Structure and Management of the OPCW

15. To reinforce the efforts for prevention of re-emergence of chemical weapons, it is important to streamline the structure and management of the Secretariat, along with stringent financial conditions. To this end, the OPCW needs to continue to strive for fitting for purpose and a “more compact, flexible and efficient” Organisation by constant review, reallocating as well as efficiently utilizing its personnel and financial resources while maintaining its capacity and the necessary functions as a specialized organisation. A solid budget program could be brought to nothing, if it is based on an unreliable source of revenue. Possible negative consequences caused by the late payment of assessed contributions should be widely shared. It is highly recommended for all the States Parties, especially those that are two or more years in arrears to regularise their payments at the earliest possible date.