

STATEMENT BY JAPAN  
AT THE FIRST COMMITTEE OF THE 76<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY

- THEMATIC DEBATE: OTHER WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION -

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Japan remains fully committed to multilateral efforts related to arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery in order to achieve global and regional peace and stability. The use of such weapons must not be permitted under any circumstances and thus Japan reiterates the importance of reinforcing the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention, and other relevant regimes.

The international community has made significant progress in preventing the re-emergence and proliferation of chemical weapons under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). However, the repeated use of chemical weapons has become a serious and urgent issue in recent years. The international community must be united in condemning the use of these weapons and perpetrators should be identified and held accountable.

In this regard, Japan welcomes reports issued by the Fact Finding Mission (FFM) and the Identification and Investigation Team (IIT). Their investigative work is essential for establishing facts surrounding allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic and identify the perpetrators. Japan commends their professional, impartial and independent work and continues to assist related activities of the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW in the country. In addition, Japan welcomes the adoption of the decision related to the first report of the IIT during the 94<sup>th</sup> session of the Executive Council, and the decision during the 25<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of State Parties, both

of which require Syria to fulfil its responsibility. We will continue to collaborate with other States Parties to the CWC to deal with the use of chemical weapons and deter its further use.

The increased threat posed by non-State actors, including by terrorists, is of particular concern and we must prevent chemical weapons and toxic chemicals from falling into their hands. In order to address this challenge, we should work to strengthen the OPCW to maximize its efficiency and encourage the States Parties to implement their national measures. Japan commends ongoing efforts by the Technical Secretariat for this purpose, even during the Covid-19 pandemic, and will also provide assistance to countries in need and actively take part in discussions to promote the national implementation of the CWC.

Japan commits itself to the destruction of its abandoned chemical weapons (ACW) as an obligation under the CWC and has invested enormous financial resources, amounting to approximately 2.6 billion Euros to cover all the related costs associated with its national operation. Although the destruction project entails various challenges and uncertainties, Japan has been making consistent progress with successful destruction of approximately 59,000 ACW items out of the 90,000 recovered. Despite the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the project continued on a partial basis with the constructive bilateral cooperation and coordination with China.

It is imperative to recognize that the Covid-19 pandemic reiterates the relevance of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). The pandemic demonstrates the potential of biological weapons to cause detrimental impact on a global scale, and hence may inspire interests in creating biological weapons. In order to reinforce the international prohibition against biological weapons, States Parties should cooperatively and constructively discuss the possible measures to strengthen the BWC towards the intersessional programme and work toward producing concrete outcomes at the 9<sup>th</sup> Review Conference next year. Japan contributes to strengthening the BWC, particularly the science and technology review process, the improvement of confidence building measures, the mechanism and procedures for providing support to states endangered by treaty violations

and other incidents. To contribute to achieving such outcomes, Japan serves as chair one of the meetings to facilitate the convergence of views in the field of science and technology review process.

In order to demonstrate commitment to international cooperation and assistance and to reinforce the BWC regime, Japan has undertaken a number of initiatives in partnership with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) and the BWC Implementation Support Unit (ISU). In the past a few years, Japan organized capacity-building workshops, bringing together various Asian countries to enhance preparedness for and response to the use of biological weapons, as well as thematic seminars in Geneva to promote dialogue on this topic. Additionally, despite the ongoing global pandemic, an online training course to promote national implementation of the BWC was successfully held last year, inviting BWC national contact points across Asia. Japan will continue to organize more international cooperation projects of this kind and hopes that many States Parties to the BWC will participate in and take advantage of our initiatives.

The United Nations Secretary-General's Mechanism for investigating the alleged use of biological and chemical weapons (UNSGM) is also an important and independent pillar to verify and prevent their use and proliferation. It is also the only available tool to investigate in the case of biological attacks and thus Japan supports the concept of preserving and strengthening the UNSGM.

Japan also underlines the importance of implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1540, which provides the international community with a basis for tackling the threat of WMD proliferation to non-State actors. Japan contributed approximately 1 million US dollars to the UNODA to promote its implementation, and part of the contribution was utilized for the translation of the Online Training Course on UNSCR 1540. Japan will continue to support the implementation of the Resolution, beyond the next comprehensive review to be adopted in 2022.

To conclude, Japan recognizes the importance of strengthening the relevant international treaties and regimes in order to realize our goal of a world free of weapons of mass destruction such as chemical and biological weapons. In this regard, we emphasize the need for effort and cooperation between stakeholders to strive towards a common understanding and take effective actions.

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