Statement of the Chinese Delegation on CWC and BWC at the 66th Session of the UNGA First Committee

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Mr. Chairman,

The Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter “the CWC”) is the first international legal instrument that bans completely an entire category of weapons of mass destruction and requires their thorough destruction under a stringent verification regime. China has always upheld the object and purpose of the CWC, committed itself to the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of chemical weapons, and opposed the proliferation of such weapons.

For 14 years since its entry into force, the CWC has been playing an important role in eliminating the threat of chemical weapons, safeguarding world peace, and promoting achievements in chemical industry for the benefit of mankind. On the other hand, the international community is now facing the challenge on how to completely implement the CWC. China believes that it is a shared responsibility of all parties to promote the full and effective implementation of the CWC and to preserve its integrity.

Now, please allow me to set forth China’s positions on several issues with regard to the implementation of the CWC.

Firstly, whether the destruction of the chemical weapons abandoned by
Japan on the territory of China (hereinafter “Japanese ACWs”) can be completed within the deadline prescribed by the CWC is a matter that bears on CWC core object and credibility. For over 60 years, the large quantities of chemical weapons abandoned by Japan on the territory of China, increasingly corroded and leaky, have posed a grave and real threat to the people in the affected areas in China in terms of the safety of their life and the environment. Over 14 years after the entry into force of the CWC, these Japanese ACWs continue to cause, from time to time, serious casualties and environmental pollution. It should be pointed out that compared to existing stockpiles, the Japanese ACWs pose a more serious threat and their destruction should demand greater urgency.

Japan, as the Abandoning State Party with the primary destruction obligations, has formally admitted that it is unable to complete destruction within the established deadline. China, as the victim, is seriously concerned that its people, land and environment will be subjected to the threat of Japanese ACWs for an even longer period of time. Nevertheless, China has taken a pragmatic, cooperative and constructive attitude in several rounds of bilateral consultations with Japan on destruction arrangement after the expiration of the deadline, which has achieved some progress. At the same time, in order to ensure the solemnity and legal force of the provisions of the CWC and the decisions of the OPCW policy-making organs, China has formally requested Japan to enter into negotiations with China on a solution within the framework of the OPCW regarding the failure to meet the deadline, for which China has put forward a written proposal. China urges Japan to take the same constructive and pragmatic attitude and show good faith for cooperation by establishing without delay destruction plans which comply with the requirement of the CWC. This will create a favourable atmosphere and conditions for the policy-making organs to address issues relating to meeting the destruction deadlines for CW stockpiles, ACWs and OCWs simultaneously and successfully. We look forward to Japan’s positive response.
Secondly, the complete destruction of chemical weapons within the final extended deadline set out by the CWC constitutes its core object and purpose. It also represents an important challenge facing the OPCW at present and in the years to come. While commending the efforts made by the Possessor States in this regard, China is concerned over the probable failure of certain Possessor States of meeting the final extended deadline. China supports the efforts within the OPCW to seek a solution to preserve the integrity of CWC on the basis of consensus through extensive consultation.

Thirdly, the CWC acts as an integral part of international regime of multilateral disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. We must ensure that the purpose of the CWC be achieved comprehensively, and in a balanced manner. What at stake here is the international peace and security, and the common interests of all countries. China maintains that at present and for a period of time to come, the OPCW and States Parties should continue to give first priority to chemical disarmament, and proceed on that understanding, to promote non-proliferation, assistance and protection against chemical weapons, international cooperation, and other endeavors in a balanced manner. Taking a constructive attitude, China wishes to continue its active involvement in relevant discussions on the future of the OPCW.

Mr. Chairman,

Since its entry into force, the Biological Weapons Convention (hereinafter referred to as the BWC) has played an irreplaceable role in eliminating the threat and preventing the proliferation of biological weapons and promoting the peaceful use of biotechnology.

At present, the BWC is well implemented in general and has become more universal in its membership. The Implementation Support Unit is operating smoothly and the intersessional process is going well. The States Parties are deepening and broadening its implementation and make use of meetings of States Parties and Experts to discuss the
implementation related issues. It serves as proactive exploration for pushing forward the multilateral biological disarmament process under the new circumstances. On the other hand, the BWC has encountered many challenges. The effectiveness of the BWC needs to be strengthened and the non-traditional security threats such as bio-terrorism, bio-safety and bio-security, and the spread of infectious diseases are increasingly prominent.

China attaches great importance to the coming 7th Review Conference and believes that the final document of the RevCon should reflect all parties' concerns equally, and keep balance among the three pillars of the BWC, namely disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful use of biotechnology. China will work together with the States Parties to explore the effective approach to enhance the implementation of the BWC under the new circumstances, promote further international cooperation and work out a realistic and practical programme of work for strengthening the intersessional process.

China would like to work together with other parties, in an open and pragmatic manner, to achieve a positive outcome and adopt practical measures at this RevCon to strengthen the effectiveness of the BWC.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.