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ITALY

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE ITALIAN REPUBLIC
TO THE OPCW AT THE 101ST SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,

I would like to thank you and the Technical Secretariat (“the Secretariat”) for having carefully led the delicate organisation of this 101st Session of the Executive Council (“the Council”).

It is a privilege for me to attend it as Vice-Chairperson under your wise leadership.

This is the third Council meeting since Russian Federation troops crossed the border into Ukraine. Nothing has changed since then. Now, as then, there is an aggressor State and there is an aggressed State. We, as a free, democratic country that repudiates war and violence, now, as then, stand with the multitude of countries calling on the Russian Federation to withdraw its troops from the entire territory of Ukraine and fully respect Ukraine’s territorial integrity, sovereignty, and independence within its internationally recognised borders.

We continue to be concerned about the risk of dangerous escalation, including, unfortunately, the threat of the use of chemical aggressors, as well as the danger of tragic accidents in the chemical industrial districts in the south-east of Ukraine.

Our country calls on the Russian Federation to disclose without further delay the circumstances of the assassination attempt against Mr Navalny. Italy, together with many other States, is still waiting for the Russian Federation to give the answers required under the terms of Article IX of the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”).

Italy takes this opportunity to once again side with the Secretariat in its handling of the Syrian Arab Republic dossier. Beyond any proclamation, the Syrian Arab Republic’s determination to refuse a Declaration Assessment Team inspector a visa to enter the country, contrary to the provisions of the Convention and United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), is the artificial representation of a willingness to cooperate in the search for the truth about the use of chemical weapons in the country. By joining this Organisation, the Syrian Arab Republic has accepted the terms of the Convention and the decisions of the Conference of the States Parties. It is its full responsibility to follow those principles to which it has adhered.

The difficult times of the Syrian conflict, the pandemic, the economic crisis, and the war in Ukraine must not cause us to lose our way towards our goals, and indeed must give us new energy in the pursuit of a free and peaceful world, finally free of the threat of weapons and chemical aggressors.



This hope finds new energy in the good auspices with which 2023 presents itself. In the coming year, the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles will be completed, the Centre for Chemistry and Technology will come into operation, and the Fifth Review Conference will provide a formidable opportunity to make the Convention more effective and more relevant to our troubled times.

We enthusiastically welcome the progression in the field of International Cooperation and Assistance and support the revision to the Draft Programme and Budget for 2023. A necessary revision that the Secretariat has managed to keep from burdening the States Parties.

Our appeal to all nations is to look forward, to support one another and not fight, and to work to push away the impending shadows of the future by contributing to and pursuing our goal, a world free of chemical hazards and war.

I would kindly ask to consider this statement as an official document and post it on Catalyst and on the OPCW public website.

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