



**OPCW**

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**ITALY**

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE ITALIAN REPUBLIC TO THE  
OPCW AT THE NINETY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,  
Director-General,  
Distinguished delegates,

I wish to congratulate H.E. Ambassador Abdelouahab Bellouki of Morocco for taking on the role of Chairperson of the Executive Council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Italy is fully confident his expertise will be an asset in ensuring the success of the work of the Executive Council.

I would also like to thank the OPCW Director General Fernando Arias, for his commitment to the implementation of the mandate of the OPCW despite the difficulties posed by this prolonged pandemic, as well as his staff. I would like to reiterate, in particular, our full confidence in the objectivity and of the activity of the Technical Secretariat.

Italy is fully aligned with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union by the Ambassador of Slovenia. I would like to focus on some issues of particular concern to my delegation.

While welcoming the steady progress towards the destruction of stockpiles of chemical weapons globally under the Secretariat verification, we reiterate Italy's concern that such heinous weapons have still repeatedly been used, causing pain and suffering to unarmed civilians.

To this regard, Italy welcomes the decision adopted by the Twenty-Fifth Session of the Conference of the States Parties which suspended the voting rights and privileges of the Syrian Arab Republic due to its failure to comply with the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter "the Convention").

The decision sends the clear message that impunity for the use of chemical weapons cannot be tolerated and therefore protects the spirit of the Convention and of international law.

While looking forward to the next Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) reports, Italy strongly urges the Syrian Arab Republic to reveal the full extent of its chemical weapons programme and to comply with the Convention.



In recent years, Italy has noted with growing concern the repeated use of chemical weapons in attempts to eliminate individuals in and outside Europe. These acts are unacceptable and intolerable, being against principles and rules of international law as well as the Convention and putting in jeopardy the international non-proliferation regime.

To this regard, Italy reiterates its concerns for the poisoning of Alexei Navalny in Russia by a chemical nerve agent of the novichok group in August 2020 and urges the Russian Federation to transparently clarify the responsibility of the incident and to cooperate with the Organisation in the exercise of all its functions, in accordance with the obligations defined in Article VII of the Convention, which urges all States Parties not to permit in any place under its control any activity prohibited by the Convention.

Mr Chairperson, Italy believes that the mandate of the Convention can be implemented only through a solid financial base and therefore it urges all State Parties to pay their contributions in full and on time.

At the same time, Italy welcomes the establishment of a working group for future appointments of the OPCW External Auditor, based on technical expertise and merit.

Italy also calls upon other Member States to fully support the establishment of the OPCW Centre for Chemistry and Technology (ChemTech Centre) so that its tasks can be performed through the use of state-of-the-art technology that they require.

I would kindly ask you to consider this statement as an official document of the Ninety-Seventh Session of the Executive Council and post it on the OPCW External Server and public website.

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