



**STATEMENT BY H. E. AMBASSADOR THOMAS SCHIEB,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF GERMANY TO THE OPCW,
AT THE 101st SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
under agenda item 6 (g) Addressing the threat from chemical weapons use**

For more than half a year Ukraine has now been the object of a brutal war of aggression launched by its neighbour Russia. I would like to recall the two statements that were delivered by my predecessor as Permanent Representative of Germany in the name of both times a large group of States Parties at the two previous sessions of this Council. In those statements, the co-sponsors condemned Russia's serious breach of international law and expressed their outrage at the elaborate, malicious disinformation campaign launched by Russia both prior to the attack and afterwards, with completely unsubstantiated and baseless claims that Ukraine was or is preparing to use chemical weapons. We pointed to Russia's reckless military attacks endangering civilian life inter alia through indiscriminate shelling of civil chemical facilities. We also expressed our deep concern about possible deliberate attacks in order to set free toxic chemicals or the outright use of chemical weapons in the form of a "false flag-operation" with the objective to blame Ukraine for the deed.

Because of these serious concerns, Germany considered it essential to respond quickly and decisively to the requests for assistance that have been made by Ukraine. I refer in particular to note No. 61219 of 18 March 2022 sent by the Permanent Representation of Ukraine to the OPCW to the Technical Secretariat, in which Ukraine urgently requested bilateral assistance from CWC States Parties in order to protect itself against chemical weapons. A similar request was made by Ukraine in the framework of the G7-led Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction which Germany is currently chairing. I also refer to the information supplied by Ukraine in repeated messages transmitted to the Technical Secretariat and CWC States Parties on the development of the situation on the ground, which together with other sources of information formed a very serious threat assessment.

As a consequence, Germany has delivered several tranches of assistance to Ukraine. The assistance provided included protective equipment and material, measuring devices, decontamination equipment and medical material, as well as relevant training. The main recipient has been the Civil Protection Agency of Ukraine. I am proud that we have been able to assist our Ukrainian friends quickly and substantially in their hour of need. I want to underline that the equipment is entirely of a defensive character, helping to protect lives in case of the most serious kinds of attacks.

In addition to the bilateral assistance delivered, Germany as Chair of the Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction has also acted to coordinate assistance by Global Partnership members in response to the requests from our fellow member Ukraine.

We are dismayed to see the Russian aggression continuing, including the indiscriminate shelling of sensitive civilian facilities. Moreover, the Russian disinformation campaign is continuing, with repeated allegations delivered through diplomatic notes to States Parties on almost a weekly basis, which time and again have proved to be baseless fabrications.

We recall that any toxic chemical used to cause death, temporary incapacitation or permanent harm to humans or animals would constitute the use of a chemical weapon.

In this situation, we call on the Technical Secretariat to continue its close monitoring of the situation in Ukraine, particularly around declared chemical industrial sites. We expect the Secretariat to stand ready to act quickly in case chemical weapons were used, allowing the speedy delivery of assistance to the victims, but also being able to rapidly launch an investigation. The message must be clear: Any such attack will be quickly investigated and its perpetrators will be identified and held to justice. With a view to recent events, please let me emphasize that when I refer to monitoring of the situation in Ukraine, this of course includes the territories illegally annexed by Russia. We strongly condemn the illegal annexation of Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson, as much as the earlier annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol. We do not and we will not recognize these illegal annexations.

We applaud the assistance given to this date in response to the request made by Ukraine for assistance and protection against the possible use of chemical weapons. We stand ready for further assistance to Ukraine, as needed, and call upon all States Parties for continued vigilance in response to the Russian aggression.

Finally, I call once more upon Russia to end its brutal and illegal war against its neighbour Ukraine, to restore the territorial integrity of Ukraine, and to stop the malicious and unworthy disinformation campaign. This campaign constitutes an abuse of the Chemical Weapons Convention, to the detriment of all of us here who want to uphold the global ban against chemical weapons that Russia herself has signed up to.