



*The Permanent Representation of Italy to the
Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons*

ITALY

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF ITALY TO THE OPCW
AT THE 103th SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,

I would first like to express our sincere gratitude to Ambassador Ziad Al Atiyah of Saudi Arabia for his skilful leadership of the Executive Council over the past year. I would also like to congratulate Ambassador Fatu of Romania for his appointment as Chair of the Executive Council.

Let me also thank Ambassador Henk Cor van der Kwast of the Netherlands and Ambassador Luri Kussing of Estonia for their outstanding efforts in their respective roles as Chair of the RC5 and Chair of the RC5 Open Ended Working Group.

Regrettably the 5ht Review Conference did not achieve the desired result. Due to the obstructionist approach of a limited number of States Parties it was not possible to reach consensus on a final document, making it more difficult to pursue the goals of the OPCW in the future.

Nevertheless, RC5 showed how the vast majority of States Parties were able to come together on many key issues that can be re-evaluated and implemented in the near future, so as to better orientate the work of the Council and to reinforce the values on which this Organization is built. I am referring to the Tenure Policy, whose flexibility is becoming increasingly relevant for the management of the OPCW staff, and to the issues related to Gender Equality and civil society involvement in the OPCW's activities.

Italy is ready to play its part in this process and invites all States Parties not to set aside the long and valuable work done before and during the RC5.

This session of the Executive Council is also the first to take place after the new Centre for Chemistry and Technology started operating. Italy, having significantly contributed to this achievement, thanks DG Arias for his unrelenting commitment to this endeavor.

We also rejoice for the upcoming completion of the destruction of all declared stockpiles. Yet another successful achievement by the OPCW.

Unfortunately, we are still confronted with long-standing threats.

After almost 10 years, Syria remains un-cooperative on most fronts. We welcome the meeting last month in Beirut between the Technical Secretariat and the authorities of the Syrian Arab Republic and we hope that concrete progress is achieved. Syria must allow the DAT and the IIT to complete their work by ensuring the entry of inspectors into the Country without restrictions and must abandon its chemical programme once and for all.

We reiterate our condemnation of the unprovoked, unjustified and illegal Russian war of aggression on Ukraine. The Russian Federation must withdraw its troops and cease its military activities. We urge Russia not to make use of chemical weapons in the context of its war against Ukraine. Finally, I would like to emphasize the danger posed by new technologies in the field of chemical threats. The Scientific Advisory Board report must remain relevant and guide us in our actions to prevent the threat from non-state actors.

Mr Chair, there are many threats and much remains to be done, but by picking up the positive signals of the Review Conference we could work together actively for a world free of the chemical threat.

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

Thank you Mr Chairperson