



*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 104th SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chair,

at the outset, I would like to praise you, the Technical Secretariat and the Director General, Ambassador Fernando Arias, for your outstanding efforts to keep this Organization fit for the future, and I am pleased to reiterate my Country's full support for your activities.

Keeping the world free of the chemical threat remains a priority for Italy at a time when the Russian Federation continues to conduct an unjustified, unprovoked and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, raising the risk of accidents or deliberate acts across the whole CBRN spectrum.

We have actively contributed to the Fifth CWC Review Conference and on that occasion we have clearly stated our support for upholding and fully implementing the Convention in all its aspects. Due to Russia's and Syria's opposition, as they objected to any mention of Syria's well-documented chemical weapons use, States-parties to the CWC failed to agree on a joint outcome document at the conclusion of the review conference. It was a missed opportunity.

Mr Chair,

we underlined at the last Executive Council the possible use of Riots Control Agents by the Russian Army in the context of its war of aggression on Ukraine, in violation of the Convention.

The possible use of prohibited agents cannot be ignored by the international community. The Russian Federation must promptly and fully answer the questions that several States Parties have asked.

Mr chair,

Italy condemns the use of toxic chemical weapons and substances by anyone, against anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances.

2023 marks the tenth anniversary of the accession of the Syrian Arab Republic to the OPCW. We condemn in the strongest possible terms Damascus' repeated use of chemical weapons against Syrian civilians and we call on Syria to amend its Chemical Weapons Convention declarations to make them accurate and complete and provide immediate and unfettered access to OPCW staff., Syria must ensure a full and swift cooperation with the Technical Secretariat's inspection and documentation activities under UN Resolution 2118 and immediately destroy its chemical arsenal once and for all.

Mr Chair,

as the process of destruction of the last chemical arsenals comes to an end, we welcome the activities related to governance issues that emerged during the 5th Review Conference. These include the work of the facilitation on Tenure Policy and the Working Group on Geographical Diversity. Issues that

we hope will progress in parallel and at an equal pace. We also consider it important to discuss how to further engage civil society, NGOs and academia in the OPCW's activities.

Finally, we express our appreciation for the continued work of the Technical Secretariat and the facilitators in approving the biennial OPCW budget.

The rising inflation rate of recent years has had a detrimental effect on the OPCW's activities; we will therefore support the Draft Decision that will be discussed at this Executive Council's meeting. We hope that the adoption of the Decision will enable the Organization to operate effectively over the next two years. We call upon all States Parties to meet their obligations and to pay their assessed contributions in full and on time.

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