



*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 28th CONFERENCE OF THE STATE PARTIES**

Mr Chair,

At the outset, I wish to congratulate you on your election as chair of the 28th Conference of the States Parties: please be assured of my delegation's full support. I would also like to seize this opportunity to commend OPCW Director General Fernando Arias' skillful leadership.

Mr Chair,

As we look at the ongoing fraught geopolitical context, we need only consider the huge and multilevel impact across the whole CBRNe spectrum of the unlawful, unjustified, and unprovoked war of aggression triggered by the Russian Federation against Ukraine. While we reiterate our strongest condemnation for this blatant violation of the UN Charter and international law, we express serious concern about the likely use of riot control agents, explicitly prohibited under the Convention, as a method of warfare in Ukraine. All this adds to a massive disinformation campaign by the Russian Federation undermining our common efforts to restore lasting safety and security prospects.

Mr Chair,

It has been ten years since the Syrian Arab Republic joined the OPCW by its free choice. And yet, Damascus' lack of cooperation with the Technical Secretariat and challenges in aligning itself with the UN provisions are detrimental to the CWC's full implementation. Moreover, conclusive reports and wide range evidence provided by the Organization's investigative bodies identifying the Syrian

Arab Forces as perpetrators of repeated chemical attacks over the years testify a glaring breach of the Convention's aim and cast an alarming shadow on our common security. We urge Syria to fully declare and destroy its chemical weapons program and stockpiles in a verifiable manner.

Mr Chair,

If the whole disarmament and non-proliferation architecture may seem falter under converging threats, it becomes increasingly important to strengthen the OPCW and further reaffirm its mandate. First of all, this can be done with adequate budgeting. Our country supports the draft decision submitted by the Technical Secretariat for the Organization's budget for the two-year period 2024-2025. We call on all States Parties to back this decision, so as to uphold the professional, transparent, and competent work of the Technical Secretariat. This also encompasses a full and timely payment by all States Parties.

Strengthening the OPCW also means giving effect to the inputs and organizational governance initiatives launched on the occasion of the 5th Review Conference: from the implementation of the Tenure Policy to the Working Group on Geographical Representation, as well as the activities embracing civil society engagement and gender equality. All these initiatives are aimed at sustaining the OPCW mandate, while making it even more inclusive and effective for the years to come. We must keep on investing in multilateralism, and work together to avert the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, and under any circumstances.

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.