



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

ITALY

**STATEMENT BY THE ITALIAN AMBASSADOR HE AUGUSTO MASSARI
AT THE 109th SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chair,

Italy aligns itself with the EU statement and I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

First, my delegation and I would like to extend gratitude to Ambassador Andre Teran PARRAL of Ecuador for chairing the previous session of the Executive Council. Then, I would like to express my congratulations to Ambassador Thomas SCHEIB on his appointment as Chair of the Executive Council. On behalf of Italy, I assure you of our full support and cooperation.

Allow me to extend a cordial greeting to the Director-General, Ambassador Fernando ARIAS, and to the Technical Secretariat. As reminded by you, Mr Chair, this is my first regular session as Permanent Representative of Italy to the OPCW. It is a pleasure for me to be here today.

Italy is observing with growing concern the increasing number of reports from various crisis areas and different actors regarding the use of chemical weapons. The third TAV Report published by the Technical Secretariat, the latest Notes Verbale from Ukraine and the Russian Federation, the critical situation in Syria and allegations by several African countries regarding the use of chemical weapons in Sudan are factors placing the chemical disarmament system under increasing stress.

Every new use, or alleged use, of chemical weapons undermines the deterrence that the international community has slowly built up over the last decades. This structure is eroded every time impunity prevails, and with it the stability of the entire multilateral security system is reduced.

In Ukraine, for the third time the Technical Secretariat has certified the actual use of chemical agents in combat. Italy strongly condemns these violations of the Convention and stresses that they are part of an unprovoked war by the Russian Federation. A war of invasion that continues to undermine the fundamental rules of disarmament, multilateralism and peaceful coexistence between States. At this regard, I would like

to recall here the upcoming “Ukraine Reconstruction & Recovery Conference” which will take place in Rome next Thursday. Jointly organized by the Ukrainian and Italian government.

The Syrian case also causes serious concern. What remains of the Assad chemical programme poses serious risks in terms of proliferation of chemical weapons by non-state actors. We welcome the constructive attitude of the new authorities in Damascus, and we expect they will contribute for a Syrian security system to be established to face the challenge posed by the chemical threat. Without an adequate security framework, it will be increasingly difficult for the Technical Secretariat to work in Syria. Italy strongly believe that there is a need of adequate and timely funding to the OPCW to ensure its full operational capacity.

In Sudan, the situation requires the utmost attention. We thank the Director-General, the Chair and the Secretariat for their active monitoring. We hope that new and clear information will be available.

In this complex scenario, we are entering the process for the selection of the next Director-General. We had the opportunity yesterday to hear all eleven candidates: it was reassuring to note the high level of preparation, diplomatic experience and technical knowledge of the candidates. We highlight the need to have a transparent and consensus-based process in the weeks ahead.

Italy intends to continue to support OPCW to face current and future challenges with strong determination and, in this framework, last week funded a new capacity-building activity under Article X of the Convention.

In conclusion, Italy strongly reiterates its confidence in the multilateral system for a world in which chemistry is only at the service of peace and progress.

Thank you.