



***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 30th SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr. Chair, Mr DG

*first I extend my best wishes to Ambassador **Augustin VASQUEZ GOMEZ** of El Salvador, on his election as Chair of this Conference.*

Mr. Chair,

Although the destruction of all declared chemical weapons was successfully completed on July 7, 2023, the OPCW remains a pillar of international disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. We have been receiving confirmation of the re-emergence of the chemical threat and witnessing reported, investigated, and certified violations of the Convention.

It is our duty to support international law and the integrity of the disarmament and non-proliferation system built through decades of efforts and shared responsibility.

*Regarding **Syria**, we take note of the progress in the mandate entrusted to the OPCW. We welcome the willingness of the Syrian transitional government and its good intentions. At the same time, we urge it to take all further steps to finally close the chemical program of Al-Assad regime.*

We took note of the Director-General's letter of November the 6th.

Italy is committed to support both the Technical Secretariat and Syria in the implementation of the mandate: immediately through a first voluntary contribution, and then through possible in-kind supports. It is our strong belief that in-kind contribution must have an increasing role in supporting Syria to dismantle the chemical weapon program of the past regime. We invite all member states to reflect on this: in fact, we are convinced that – in the medium-long term – it is our common interest that the new Syrian authorities become increasingly autonomous in managing the dismantling program. Italy is engaged, together with other partners within the European Union, in setting up a strategy at this regard.

We are deeply aware of the critical security conditions in which OPCW inspectors operate in Syria. We urge all actors to strengthen coordination and allow for the identification, declaration, and destruction, in a controlled and verified manner, of everything will be found.

Mr. Chair,

*we cannot remain silent on the increase in reports of the use of chemical agents in **Ukraine**. The increase concerns, the frequency of incidents, their geographical spread along the front line and the types of agents used, go beyond the use of Riot Control Agents and include far more lethal substances such as Chloropicrin.*

This is a consequence of the Russian Federation's unjustified, unprovoked and illegal aggression against Ukraine.

Mr. Chair,

*Italy supports the draft decision on the Organization's **biennial budget** and call all States Parties to pay their contributions in full and on time.*

*Finally, allow me to emphasize the great significance of the election by consensus of Ambassador **Sabrina DALLAFIOR MATTER** of Switzerland as the next Director General. The first woman to lead the OPCW brings with her a high-level background in disarmament and diplomacy, along with the charisma and leadership she showed throughout the selection process. It was a highly demanding process, which was driven by Ambassador Thomas SCHIEB of Germany, Chair of the Executive Council, to whom we extend our sincere gratitude and appreciation.*

Amb. Dallafior will need the support of the membership to tackle significant challenges. The OPCW gained more attention and competence in the last years. With greater importance comes greater responsibility. This responsibility is on the DG and the TS, but also on us: the States Parties must support them with steady commitment, cooperation and transparency. Also, we do not have to forget other key priorities, such as the OPCW Program for Africa and the growing challenges of artificial intelligence, which is becoming more and more relevant for all of us.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.