



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

ITALY

**STATEMENT BY THE ITALIAN PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
HE AMB. AUGUSTO MASSARI
AT THE 111th SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr. Chair,

Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered by Cyprus on behalf of the European Union, and I wish to add some remarks in my national capacity.

*While we are concerned about **developments in the Middle East** and the growing global instability, Italy follows the activities in Syria relating the elimination of any remnants of the Assad-era Syrian Chemical Weapons programme. We would like to renew our willingness to support the OPCW and the new Syrian Permanent Representative whom, we are confident, will bring a continuative contribution to the work of the Technical Secretariat on this task.*

*We follow closely the case of the **75 cylinders** disappeared and were later found destroyed in the Aleppo area. This is an unexpected event, which could raise some concerns. We believe that any further clarification on the fate of these materials and the possible risks of proliferation, as well as the impact this incident may have on cooperation between the Technical Secretariat and the Syrian authority, would be useful.*

*We welcome the **fifth report of the IIT**, which confirms the brutality of the deposed al-Assad regime, and is a testament to the professionalism, independence and competence of the mechanism throughout its life. We trust that the valuable experience achieved by the IIT will be fully preserved within the Organization.*

*We continue to support **Ukraine** in its resistance to the illegal and illegitimate Russian invasion. We fully understand the call for a mechanism of accountability by Ukraine. The credibility of the Chemical Weapons Convention also depends on the fight against impunity.*

*We note with concern the reports relating to the **Sturgess and Navalny cases**, coming from the United Kingdom and other European States Parties. They indicate deadly activities not compatible with the obligations under the Convention.*

*The concerns emerging from Syria, Ukraine and other contexts, together with tensions in **Sudan** and **Lebanon**, confirm how fragile the current chemical security environment is. This Council has the responsibility to preserve the Convention, one of the fundamental pillars of the arms control and non-proliferation system.*

*Italy seeks to contribute concretely to this effort, including through **financial support** for the Organization's capacity-building activities, the Syria Trust Fund and the work of the Scientific Advisory Board, which we will have the honour of hosting for a workshop at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rome next summer. We will continue to invest in the OPCW, believing that strengthening expertise, transparency and technical and scientific cooperation means strengthening the Convention.*

At this time of leadership transition, we trust that the Organisation will continue to operate effectively with transparency to ensure the chemical threat does not aggravate the current global instability.

Mr Chair, I would like to state again that Italy will continue to do its part, with full commitment.

Thank you.