



Permanent Mission of Italy
UN - New York

First Committee of the 77th UN General Assembly

Other Weapons of Mass Destruction

**Statement by Mr. Tancredi Francese,
Deputy Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament**

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Mister Chair,

Italy aligns itself with the statement of the European Union. I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

Mister Chair,

Italy remains fully committed to effective multilateral action against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, which are a growing threat to international peace and security. Securing sensitive materials, especially from access by terrorist networks, and implementing effective export controls continue to be major challenges.

These challenges point to the need for the universal and effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC). We call upon all States that are not yet parties to ratify or accede to these Conventions without delay and without conditions.

Mister Chair,

Italy believes that the international community needs to invest more resources in the international architecture dealing with biological weapons. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown how important is for us to work together to improve global biosecurity and biosafety. In this regard, the BWC is of the utmost importance and every possible effort should be made to strengthen its regime and ensure its full and effective implementation.

The upcoming Review Conference represents a key opportunity to take stock of the work the States Parties have conducted during the inter-sessional period and to build the bases of our collective engagement in the years to come. Nevertheless, it is difficult to ignore the important challenges we have to face, since we found ourselves in a situation that is far from being ideal. Dialogue and flexibility are more essential than ever.

We stand ready to cooperate with all States Parties to achieve common understanding and to identify a strong outcome that will outline very clearly our goals for the next review cycle and identify the most effective way to concretely strengthen the Convention.

It is time for us to draw a line on the story of the BWC, putting an end to reciprocal recriminations about its past, and opening a new page for the future of the Convention. The ninth Review Conference represents an extremely important opportunity and the international community cannot afford the price of a failure.

Mister Chair,

This year marked the 25th Anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), a crucial instrument of the global non-proliferation and disarmament regime. Italy remains firmly committed to supporting the CWC and the work of the OPCW, and looks forward to the fifth Review Conference, which will be an opportunity to consider how to further strengthen the implementation of the Convention and counter the re-emergence of chemical weapons. Italy will contribute actively and constructively to the work of the Open Ended Working Group (OEWG).

We reaffirm the need to ensure full compliance with the CWC and the 1925 Geneva Protocol. The international community has a shared responsibility to enforce the prohibition of chemical weapons and support the international chemical non-proliferation regime, which is essential for international peace and security.

We are deeply concerned by the repeated use of chemical weapons in recent years. In the strongest possible terms, we condemn their use by anyone, anywhere, anytime and under any circumstances. We must respond to this alarming trend by ensuring accountability and continuing to take a clear stance against impunity for such heinous crimes.

We firmly condemn the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Air Force and urge once again Syria to take all the measures required to resolve, in full cooperation with the OPCW, the pending issues and to ensure full compliance with the Convention.

In the same vein, we reiterate our call on the Russian Federation to disclose without further delay the circumstances of the assassination attempt on Mr. Alexei Navalny.

Moreover, in the context of its war of aggression against Ukraine, Russia has engaged in a campaign of disinformation in spreading unsubstantiated and unfounded allegations against Ukraine and other regarding chemical weapons. While Russia has a track record in the use of chemical weapons in assassinations and assassination attempts, as well as in sowing disinformation, Ukraine on the other hand is a responsible member of the CWC and in full compliance with the Convention. In this context, we also strongly defend the OPCW Technical Secretariat against baseless accusations and attacks on its integrity and credibility through deliberate campaigns of state-sponsored disinformation.

Mister Chair,

Italy remains deeply concerned by the increasing risk of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of non-state actors, particularly terrorist networks. This is why we support the full implementation of the UNSC Resolution 1540, including by increasing national capacities in the implementation of non-proliferation measures.

We also attach great importance to the UN Secretary-General's Mechanism, the only existing framework that provides for an investigation of alleged use of biological weapons, which has successfully worked in the past.

Thank you, Mister Chair.