

AMBAXXATA
TAR-REPUBBLIKA TA' MALTA



EMBASSY OF
THE REPUBLIC OF MALTA

THE HAGUE

Read out verbatim

Mr. Chairperson,
Mr. Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,

Malta aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the EU. In addition I would like to make some additional remarks in my national capacity.

Malta joins other delegations in extending its warmest congratulations to Ambassador Almir Šahović (Bosnia and Herzegovina) for his well-deserved success in being nominated as the Chairperson of the 29th Conference of State Parties and reassures him of our full support.

While, last year the OPCW was successful in reaching one of its core milestones which further reaffirms the relevance of multilateralism and disarmament regimes, Malta acknowledges that the global disarmament architecture remains under threat. As a result, Malta is committed to continue to engage with the OPCW and its State Parties in an effort to reach the ultimate goal of establishing a world free from chemical weapons.

Mr. Chairperson,

Malta welcomes the recent conclusion of the Declaration Assessment Team's 28th round of consultations with Syrian Authorities. Nonetheless, Malta notes with concern Syria's lack of considerable progress in submitting an accurate declaration of its stockpiles of chemical weapons. We urge Syria to adopt a more constructive approach in an effort to fully comply with its obligations, including full cooperation with the OPCW Technical Secretariat.

Within the context of Russia's continued war of aggression in Ukraine, Malta is also concerned about allegations regarding the use of Riot Control Agents and Chloropicrin. Malta underlines that as a matter of principle State Parties are committed not to use riot control agents as a method of warfare. In this regard, we are concerned about the findings of the TAV report issued on 18 November 2024 which confirms the presence of riot control agents. More concrete investigations should be carried out to determine attribution.

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We are also deeply concerned by the ongoing conflict in Gaza and Lebanon, the situation in the West Bank and the tensions in the wider region. Malta continues to call for de-escalation efforts including for an immediate and permanent ceasefire, the unconditional release of all hostages, and the delivery of humanitarian aid.

Mr. Chairperson,

In principle, Malta condemns the use of Chemical weapons under any circumstance. Fortunately, modern advances in technology provide us with the necessary tools to perform reliable and trustworthy chemical analysis and therefore from a technical point of view there is not much room left for doubts.

Within this context it is also crucial to harness the benefits of emerging technologies especially Artificial Intelligence. In this regard, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation for the efforts undertaken by the Director General, H.E. Fernando Arias, as well as Germany and Morocco for keeping this topic high on the agenda. Whilst highlighting the possible benefits of emerging technologies it is also crucial to underscore the need to mitigate potential risks.

While our main objective within the OPCW should be entirely focused on the elimination of the threat posed by Chemical Weapons, Malta strongly opines that in our effort to consider AI related opportunities and threats, within the international community it is necessary to also consider the implications of AI on all Weapons of Mass Destruction Categories. The difference between a Chemical Weapon and a Biological Weapon relates to the warhead; the delivery systems are generally common for both. Malta is of the view that the International Community should consider ways which would enable us to coordinate effectively and efficiently to ensure that AI research and lessons learnt are shared in respective fora.

Mr. Chairperson,

Malta expresses its full trust in the professionalism and impartiality of the Director General and the Technical Secretariat. Malta is fully confident that the current investigative procedures followed by the OPCW and its operational teams on the ground, are reliable and trustworthy. Doubting the work of our technical specialists, or politicising their scientific findings, jeopardizes the scope of our Organisation. To mitigate this, and if at all necessary, we should consider engaging in any potential confidence and trust building measures, in good faith, to ensure that investigative results are respected to the full by all.

Mr. Chairperson,

As a strong advocate of gender equality and civil society engagement, Malta calls for more efforts to mainstream gender and to improve engagement with civil society. Towards this

end we highly appreciate Germany's and Costa Rica's leadership in streamlining the participation of civil society and regret that so far state parties were not able to reach consensus.

Mr. Chairperson,

In conclusion, we remain steadfast in our efforts to address impunity while also adopting a pro-active approach aimed at mitigating against future risks. Within this context we call for the universality and the full implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, in an effort to safeguard humankind from Chemical Weapons.

I would kindly ask you to consider this statement as an official document of the Twenty-ninth Session of the Conference of the States Parties and to post it on the OPCW external server and public website.

Thank you.