



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

ITALY

**STATEMENT BY THE ITALIAN AMBASSADOR HE GIORGIO NOVELLO
AT THE 106th SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chair,

At the outset, I wish to congratulate you on your election as the Chair of the Executive Council. As Vice Chair, I assure you of my utmost willingness to work together for the common interest of the Organisation.

I would also like to thank Ambassador Lucian Fatu of Romania. Your leadership of the Executive Council has been crucial.

I also commends the strong guidance of OPCW Director General, Ambassador Fernando Arias. I would like to assure you and your staff of Italy's highest consideration. We have full confidence that your leadership will draw a credible path towards a successful outcome of this important meeting.

Mr Chair,

More than two years have passed since the Russian Federation began its unlawful, unprovoked and unjustifiable war of aggression against Ukraine. We cannot adapt to the reality of a full-scale war in Europe where thousands of soldiers and civilians are losing their lives. We reiterate our strongest condemnation for this blatant violation of the UN Charter and international law. This senseless aggression has shocked the entire world, making it a less safe and less stable place.

We express serious concern for the alleged use by the Russian Federation of riot control agents, explicitly prohibited under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), as a method of warfare against Ukraine as well as the alleged use of choking agent chloropicrin. There are worrying indications that the use of riot control agents by the Russian forces is increasing. Ignoring these signs underlined by several communications from Ukraine, can be very dangerous.

We urge Russia to desist from its unlawful actions and call for an immediate withdrawal of its army and military equipment from Ukrainian territory.

Mr Chair,

Damascus' lack of cooperation with the Technical Secretariat and challenges in aligning itself with the UN provisions are detrimental to the CWC's full implementation.

The resumption of DAT activities in Syria had raised our hopes for a new course of Syrian cooperation. Apparently, this is not happening and the status of the Syrian Initial Declaration is not progressing. This is unacceptable after more than ten years.

We urge Syria to begin a path of transparent and open cooperation.

Mr Chair,

We call once again on the Russian Federation and Syria to renounce their chemical weapons programs. In the face of the use of chemical agents and the deliberate violation of the Convention, there can be no hesitancy and impunity as an option.

Italy follows with attention and concern the global wave of instability sweeping the world. If the whole disarmament and non-proliferation architecture may seem falter under converging threats, it becomes increasingly important to reaffirm the importance of the OPCW mandate. We believe that international law remains the only compass and therefore we are ready to support, among others, the Technical Secretariat and the Convention to ensure a world free of chemical threats.

We intend to sustain this Organisation with strong determination to face current and future challenges adapting the CWC verification regime to modern industry, and to reflect the rapid developments in science and technology.

I would kindly ask you to consider this statement as an official document of this session and post it on the OPCW external server and public website.

Thank you.