



*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 107th SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chair,

at the outset, I would like to thank you for your outstanding guidance during the preparation of the 107th Executive Council.

My sincere thanks also go to the Director General whose solid leadership is guiding the Organisation through difficult times of geopolitical instability and organizational transformation.

Mr Chair,

even in this Council we are forced to open by denouncing the illegal and unprovoked war of invasion the Russian Federation has launched against Ukraine.

Russian aggression is not only an act of violence with very serious geopolitical, economic and social consequences on the entire planet. It violates the fundamental rules, values and principles of the rules-based international order and multilateral cooperation.

If the rules of international law are broken, we will achieve a multiplication of chaos and crises, with a natural fragmentation of the geo-economic space with severe consequences on global economy, including food and energy security.

Within the context of the very serious Russian aggression, there are many reasons for concern. Some directly concern this Council and the reason why we exist as the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. These are the several indications of the potential use of Riot Control Agents and Chloropicrin by the Russian Federation army against Ukraine.

The illegal use of these substances aligns perfectly with the irresponsible decision to launch the war in Ukraine, but also with the never clarified circumstances surrounding the poisoning and death of Mr. Navalny. This is an unacceptable attitude of the Russian Federation towards the international community as well as the States Parties of this

Organisation by not give clear response to the Art. IX questions raised on both the Navalny case and the use of Riot Control Agents in Ukraine.

Mr Chair,

in terms of violations of the Chemical Weapons Convention, we cannot but return to the Syrian dossier. The 10th anniversary of Syria's entry into the Organisation is far behind us. Well, the gaps in the initial Syrian declaration - which was never finalised - instead of decrease, tend to increase, proposing discoveries and questions that lead to the belief in a broader Syrian chemical programme than initially observed.

Syria has violated the Convention and continues to fail to comply with it. This is unacceptable and there must be accountable for it.

Mr Chair,

While geopolitical instability and the Syrian file present us with a worrying picture, we welcome the efforts of the Technical Secretariat to keep the OPCW fit to operate.

We welcome the Director-General dedication in raising the issue of emerging technologies with special regard to Artificial Intelligence and its impact on chemical disarmament. Italy resolutely shares Director Arias' concerns about these issues. We commend the cycle of conferences on the subject that began in Berlin last June and we will participate with conviction in the Rabat Conference next month.

Artificial Intelligence represents an ongoing revolution. A challenge of huge importance for which we must be prepared in order to maximize the opportunities and reduce the associated risks.

We would like to thank the Technical Secretariat and all the actors who are working hard to make the OPCW relevant in the near and distant future. In doing so, we would like to remind, all States Parties, to help in making available the required financial instruments. This is why Italy supports the revision of the 2024-2025 Biennial Budget and calls on all States Parties to pay their due in full and on time.

Mr Chairperson, please consider this statement as an official document of the Council to be posted on the Catalyst and on the OPCW public website.

Thank you.