



**Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention**  
**Meeting of Experts**  
*Geneva, 7 – 8 August 2018*

**MX 1 – International Cooperation and Assistance**

**Statement by Mr Alessandro Mandanici**  
**Deputy-Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament**

**Agenda item 9**

Madam Chair,

Cooperation and assistance in the field of prevention, detection, and response to outbreaks of infectious disease are a fundamental part of Italy's development cooperation programmes.

Interventions in the health sector by the Italian Development Cooperation (IDC) follow the strategic priority assigned to Global Health in the IDC's Three-Year Programming and Policy Planning Document for 2017-2019, and in the thematic leading principles lastly reviewed in 2014. The document defines the fight against infectious and tropical diseases - HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, polio, viral hepatitis and bacterial meningitis - as a policy priority, aiming at providing prevention and immunization measures, medical treatment and social assistance to affected communities. It also sets the framework for initiatives primarily intended to offer assistance to developing countries in order to improve their policies and practices in fields such as: organization and management of basic social and health services, control of infectious diseases, environmental health, medical and surgical emergencies and fight against mother and infant mortality.

In 2017 Italy assigned to the health sector more than 140 million euro between bilateral and multilateral channels, making health one of the major sectors of investment in financial and operative terms. At the multilateral level, it is confirmed that global health represents the first area of financing for the Italian Development Cooperation, both in 2017 and in 2018.

Italy has a strong tradition of commitment against pandemics and infectious disease, starting with its regular contributions to the Global Fund to Fight Against AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria: for the period 2017-2019, such a contribution amounts to 140 million Euro. Italy is also one of the lead contributors to the Global Alliance for Vaccine Immunization (GAVI), which has so far provided vaccines to 700 million people in developing countries and improved access to vaccines. Italy's contribution is channeled through both the support to innovative financing mechanisms by the Ministry of Economy and Finance, and through core resources provided by the Italian Development Cooperation, amounting to 100 million Euro for the period 2016-2020.

Italy is also part of the Global Health Security Agenda (GHTSA), a growing multi-stakeholder partnership created to help build countries' capacity to respond to infectious disease threats. Under the GHTSA framework, Italy has been a frontrunner in the immunization sector, acting predominantly in the Mediterranean basin and developing common epidemic identification mechanisms for the benefit of the health system of partner countries.

The Italian Development Cooperation is also contributing to the WHO initiative on “Managing acute and long-term effects of deliberate exposures to chemical and biological hazards” through funding jointly provided by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Health, for a total of 698.000 USD.

This initiative aims to enhance response capabilities of partner countries in the case of chemical and biological events, as well as to mitigate the long-term consequences on the health of populations exposed to chemical and biological agents, independently of the accidental or intentional nature of such events. Particular attention is being paid to the protection of vulnerable groups, such as women and children. The project will be implemented in Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon, over a period of two years.

Thank you, Madam Chair