



Permanent Mission of Italy  
UN - Geneva

**Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention  
Meeting of Experts**

*Geneva, 29 July - 8 August 2019*

**MX 1 – International Cooperation and Assistance**

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

**Agenda item 10**

*Collaboration with international organizations and networks related to combating infectious diseases at all levels, as well as regional and sub-regional cooperation to promote implementation of all articles of the Convention*

Mr. 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 the fight against mother and infant mortality.

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, which operates in more than 100 countries, with primary focus on low and mid-to-low income countries. For the period 2017-2019, such a contribution amounts to 140 million Euro, 55 million of which allocated for the current year.

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 children, prevented more than 10 million deaths, and improved access to vaccines. Italy's contribution is conveyed through two main channels: first, support by the Ministry of Economy and Finance to innovative financing mechanisms, such as the International Finance Facility for Immunization and – that Italy contributed to establishing – and the Advance Market Commitment, of which Italy is one of the main donors. The second channel is represented by core resources provided by the Italian Development Cooperation, amounting to 68 million euros for the period 2017-2019, with a further 28 million planned for 2020.

Italy is also part of the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA), a growing multi-stakeholder partnership created to help build countries' capacity to respond to infectious disease threats. Under the GHSA 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.

Several ongoing projects funded by the Italian Development Cooperation aim to provide assistance in response to health emergencies caused by disease outbreaks. For instance, since last fall, we have allocated 400'000 Euros in response to the cholera outbreak in Zimbabwe, channeled through the International Federation of the Red Cross and UNICEF; 300'000 Euros to respond to the meningitis and measles outbreak in Burkina Faso, through the WHO; 800'000 Euros in response to the most recent Ebola outbreak in the DRC, through the IFRC and the WHO. In Niger, the Italian Cooperation helped provide medicines and medical devices to the local authorities in order to address prevalent disease emergencies such as cholera and malaria.

Italy's involvement in preventing and responding to disease outbreaks also takes the form of direct participation of Italian public health and research institutions in international, multi-donor projects aiming to strengthen or develop capacities for disease surveillance, detection, and response.

We will be happy to facilitate contact with the relevant institutions for more details on specific projects in this domain.

Thank you, Mister Chair