



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 9

Promotion of capacity building, through international cooperation, in biosafety and biosecurity and for detecting, reporting and responding to outbreaks of infectious disease or biological weapons attacks, including in the areas of preparedness, response, and crisis management and mitigation.

Mister Chair,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on your appointment and assure you of my delegation's full support.

Italy aligns itself with the statement of the European Union. I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

Mister Chair,

In Italy's view, international cooperation and assistance under art. X of the BWC are essential both to enhance national capacities for the use of bacteriological agents and toxins for peaceful purposes, and to mitigate global biological threats.

Italy has a long history of cooperation projects relevant to the Convention, many of which are outlined in Working Paper 9 submitted in 2018 by a number of States participating in the Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction. In these, Italian Government agencies, institutions and research centers are involved through funding or direct implementation. These projects are often implemented in close partnership with international and intergovernmental organizations – such as the Organization for Animal Health, the World Food Programme and the World Health Organization – as well as Italian and foreign research and health control institutions.

Some examples include the Pan-African Network for Rapid Research, Response, Relief and Preparedness for Infectious Diseases Epidemics, aiming to strengthen regional and pan-African capacities to enable rapid and effective response to emerging and re-emerging infectious disease threats; setting up Laboratory Information Management Systems in selected African countries to improve the ability of laboratories to rapidly report results, in order to strengthen diagnostic capacity and therefore minimize the risk of potential pandemic threats; improving epidemiological and serological tools for the diagnosis and control of Brucellosis in the Mediterranean region; and extending to the whole Kurdistan Autonomous Region the health information system set up in a recently concluded pilot project. The information system will be able to collect, analyze, disseminate and utilize data regarding disease occurrence, vaccinations, child-births and deaths.

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

In this framework, Italy is 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 for the period 2018-2020.

This initiative aims to strengthen its support to countries in assessing, monitoring and managing the immediate, as well as long-term, health consequences of exposure to selected chemical and biological hazards during a deliberate event, with a focus on the possible mental health components.

Thank you, Mister Chair.