



Permanent Mission of Italy
UN - New York

First Committee of the 75th UN General Assembly

Cluster 2: Other Weapons of Mass Destruction

Italy remains fully committed to effective multilateral action against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, which are a growing threat to international peace and security. Securing sensitive materials, especially from access by terrorist networks, and implementing effective export controls continue to be major challenges.

These challenges point to the need for the universal and effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC). We call upon all States that are not yet parties to ratify or accede to these Conventions without delay and without conditions.

Italy remains firmly committed to supporting the CWC and the work of the OPCW, and reaffirms the need to ensure full compliance with the CWC and the 1925 Geneva Protocol. Moreover, we wish to state our full support for the UN Secretary-General's Mechanism, the only existing framework that provides for an investigation of alleged use of biological weapons, which has successfully worked in the past. The international community has a shared responsibility to enforce the prohibition of biological and chemical weapons and support the international non-proliferation regime, which is essential for international peace and security.

We are deeply concerned by the repeated use of chemical weapons in recent years. In the strongest possible terms, we condemn their use by anyone – be it a State or a non-State actor, – anywhere, anytime and under any circumstances. We must respond to this alarming trend, as emphasized by the UN Secretary-General in his 2018 Agenda for Disarmament, by ensuring accountability and continuing to take a clear stance against impunity for such heinous crimes. Therefore, Italy joined and actively participates in the Partnership Against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons, launched in January 2018.

Italy firmly condemns the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Air Force as concluded by the first report of the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team (IIT). We welcome the OPCW Executive Council Decision taken in July 2020 on addressing the possession and use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic and urge the Syrian Arab Republic to take all the measures required by such decision.

We also condemn, in the strongest possible terms, the poisoning of Alexei Navalny with a chemical nerve-agent. Italy welcomes the delivery of the OPCW's analysis and calls on Russia to investigate and to disclose in a transparent manner the circumstances of this chemical weapons attack, to fully cooperate with the OPCW Technical Secretariat in order to resolve this issue, and ultimately to comply with its obligations as a Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) State Party.

The current pandemic has shown how important is for us to work together to improve biosecurity and biosafety. The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention is of the utmost importance, as is the need to strengthen the international architecture to regulate biological weapons. The BTWC operates in a highly dynamic environment, characterized by rapid scientific and technological developments. It is therefore essential to give the Convention the tools and procedures it requires to respond more rapidly to emerging needs and challenges. This is why we value a strong intersessional work program and, in the current cycle, many interesting proposals have been submitted for consideration. We call upon all States Parties to actively participate in the work of the Convention, bringing their constructive contribution to the process leading towards the Review Conference.

Finally, Italy remains deeply concerned by the increasing risk of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of non-state actors, particularly terrorist networks. This is why we support the full implementation of the 1540 UNSCR, including by increasing national capacities in the implementation of non-proliferation measures.