Mr. Chair,

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

Mr. Chair.

Italy remains fully committed to effective multilateral action against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, which poses a growing threat to international peace and security. The existence of proliferation programs and networks, difficulties in securing sensitive materials, risks posed by terrorists' gaining access to them, and the establishment of effective export controls remain major challenges. In this light, universalisation and effective implementation of the CWC and the BTWC remain essential.

Mr. Chair,

Italy strongly supports the CWC and the work of the OPCW, and reaffirms the importance of full compliance with the 1925 Geneva Protocol. The international community shares the responsibility to enforce the prohibition of chemical weapons and uphold the chemical international non-proliferation regime, which is vital for international peace and security.

We are deeply concerned that chemical weapons have been repeatedly used in recent months. We reiterate our condemnation of the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, and anytime.

But condemnation is not enough. The international community must ensure accountability and continue to take a clear stance against impunity for such heinous crimes. In this spirit, Italy actively participates in the Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons.
We also welcome the June 2018 Decision of the Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the CWC, which enhances the capacity of the OPCW Technical Secretariat to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in Syria. We stand ready to support the Secretariat and to cooperate with all States Parties in the implementation of this Decision.

We reiterate our support for the work of the OPCW Fact Finding Mission to continue investigating allegations of use of chemical weapons, and urge the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to honour its obligations as a State Party to the CWC, and to extend full cooperation to the OPCW in order to resolve all outstanding issues relating to implementation of the Convention.

Mr. Chair,

Italy attaches great importance to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and recognizes the need to strengthen the international architecture dealing with biological weapons. The BTWC operates in a highly dynamic scientific and technological environment, making it essential to endow the Convention with the appropriate tools to respond rapidly to emerging needs and challenges. With this aim, a strong intersessional work programme is fundamental.

We regret that the delayed or missed payment of mandatory contributions by some States Parties is putting the operation of the Convention, the ISU, and possibly also the convening of the 2018 Meeting of the States Parties at risk. We look forward to discussing possible solutions in the next few weeks, and call on all States Parties to abide by their financial obligations on time and in full.

Mr. Chair,

Finally, Italy remains deeply concerned by the increasing risk of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of non-state actors, particularly in relation to terrorist acts. In this respect, we support the strengthening of the 1540 Committee mechanism to increase national capacities in the implementation of non-proliferation measures, and we welcome the positive outcome of the Review of the UN Resolution 1540 regime, as embodied in UN Security Council resolution n. 2325.

We reiterate our support for the universal and full implementation of all relevant international instruments. In particular, we underline the importance of the International Convention on the Suppression of Acts on Nuclear Terrorism and the Convention on Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and Amendment thereto. We encourage all States to become Party to these instruments, and to comply fully with their provisions.

Thank you.