



CZECH REPUBLIC

Permanent Mission of the Czech Republic to the United Nations

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**First Committee Thematic Debate
Other Weapons of Mass Destruction Cluster**

Statement by

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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Dear Mr. Chairperson, distinguished delegates,

Czechia fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union and would like to add the following remarks in its national capacity.

With regard to biological weapons, the Review Conference of the BWC in December last year has shown that agreeing on an outcome document is possible. This is encouraging. We have high hopes that the newly created Working Group will seize the momentum and will deliver tangible outcomes that will bolster future implementation of the Convention.

Further in relation to Biological Weapons, we underline the continued support of Czechia to the UN Secretary General's Mechanism for investigation of alleged use of chemical or biological weapons. This is the only independent mechanism, which the international community has at its disposal, in case of an attack using biological agents. The Mechanism has proven its viability in the past. We therefore see no reason to look for alternative solutions. On the contrary, States should strengthen the UNSGM by nominating experts and laboratories put at its disposal in case of need.

With regard to the OPCW, it is unfortunate that the Review Conference in May has not yielded any substantial outcome document, although a number of key issues have been addressed. It is now in the interest of all of us to work on these topics together to further strengthen the Convention and the OPCW alike.

It will not be easy, as the environment remains tense. Russia continues to spread disinformation about the Syrian chemical dossier, still challenging the outcomes of two consecutive international investigating bodies – the Joint Investigative Mechanism and the Investigation and Identification Team of the OPCW – each of whom arrived at the same conclusions – that the Syrian Government has resorted to use of chemical weapons against its population.

Russia, in an attempt to divert attention from its military aggression against Ukraine, also continues to spread wild stories of alleged military grade biological program in Ukraine.

We would like to remind everyone that no attacks directed against international organisations, their technical secretariats or their Directors, will divert our focus from upholding international law. Nor will these attacks constitute extenuating circumstances

for the crimes committed. To address violations of international norms against weapons of mass destruction is the very “raison d’être” of international bodies, it is at the core of their mandates.

Czechia continues to remain a steadfast defender of all international instruments in the area of WMDs, including related export control regimes. Our support is not only diplomatic and political. Through our voluntary contributions and provision of expertise in capacity building programmes, Czechia supports the ongoing work of the IAEA and the OPCW, especially in peaceful uses.

I thank you.