



S L O V A K I A

Statement

by

H.E. Mr. Michal Mlynár

Permanent Representative of the Slovak Republic
to the United Nations in New York

**at the Thematic Discussion on Other Weapons of Mass Destruction
of the 76th Session of the First Committee
United Nations General Assembly**

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Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on the assumption of your Chairmanship. Slovakia wishes you all the success in your endeavours in steering this prominent body and let me assure you of my delegation's full support.

Slovakia associates itself with the statement delivered by the European Union. Nevertheless, I would like to stress the following points from the national perspective.

Mr. Chairman,

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery remains a major threat to international peace and security.

The global non-proliferation system, based on international treaties, export control regimes and other initiatives, solidly built up in the last decades has been challenged by various breaches of its norms, efforts of some states seeking to develop weapons of mass destruction or possess a knowledge leading to having such capabilities.

Compliance with international obligations is a fundamental precondition for effective functioning of any treaty based international arrangement, including the non-proliferation regime. Disrespect to mutually agreed norms endangers peace and security and is of a grave concern.

The risks that terrorists could acquire such weapons, precursors or means of delivery continue to be real and must not be underestimated. International export control regimes also provide critical contribution towards a safer world as they underpin existing disarmament and non-proliferation instruments.

Mr. Chairman,

Slovakia reiterates its firm stance that any use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, at any time and under any circumstances is unacceptable. The States and non-state actors must be fully aware that any use of chemical weapons constitutes a flagrant violation of international law and it is categorically reprehensible. Impunity for the use of chemical weapons must not be tolerated.

Slovakia supports universalisation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, and calls on those remaining States not yet party to the CWC to join the Convention without further delay.

Slovakia fully supports work and mandate of the OPCW and has full confidence in the professionalism, impartiality and independence of the OPCW Technical Secretariat. We call on those who hinder the application of the mandate of the organization to refrain from doing so.

Slovakia took note of the reports of the OPCW Technical Secretariat concerning the elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons programme. Slow progress is worrisome and we call on Syria to seriously engage and fully cooperate with the OPCW and comply with its obligations under the Convention. In this context, Slovakia supported the decision of this year's Conference of the CWC States Parties suspending the voting rights and privileges of the Syrian Arab Republic. Slovakia continues to support the work of the OPCW Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), the Fact Finding Mission (FFM) as well Investigation and Identification Team (IIT).

The assassination attempt on the Russian citizen Alexei Navalny is another shocking use of a military chemical nerve agent of the "Novichok" group, which Slovakia strongly condemns. Such a use of chemical weapons is absolutely unacceptable and its perpetrators must be held accountable. We continue to call on the Russian Federation to ensure impartial and transparent investigation in close cooperation with the OPCW.

To reinforce the ban on chemical weapons Slovakia also participates in and supports the efforts of the International Partnership Against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

Slovakia considers the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) as an important pillar of the disarmament and non-proliferation architecture and supports the global norm against biological weapons.

The current experience with the COVID19 pandemics raised awareness of biological risks and vulnerabilities and is testing resilience of our societies. It could serve as the impetus to intensify work also within the BTWC, particularly as we approach the forthcoming Review Conference of the Convention.

Slovakia is fully committed to contributing to the success of the Ninth Review Conference in 2022. We believe rapid science and technological developments relevant to the BWC need to be addressed appropriately through the strengthened process within the Convention. Assistance, response and preparedness also deserves appropriate attention at the Review Conference, particularly a proposal of database for assistance in the framework of Article VII.

Slovakia also supports the UN Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons, which is unique and currently the only independent international instrument for investigating alleged use of biological weapons. The integrity of the mechanism must be preserved.

Mr. Chairman,

To conclude let me express Slovakia's commitment and readiness to cooperate with other states to strengthen WMD non-proliferation regime.

Thank you.