



Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
and International Cooperation

## **Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)**

**First Preparatory Committee for the 11<sup>th</sup> Review Conference of the Parties  
Vienna, 31 July – 11 August 2023**

**Cluster I  
Statement delivered by  
Ambassador Leonardo Bencini  
Head of the Delegation of Italy  
3 August 2023**

Mr. Chair,

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

Mr. Chair,

Italy would once again like to reaffirm its strong and unwavering belief in the Treaty as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, an essential component of nuclear disarmament and of the multilateral architecture.

In the current security environment, it is necessary to support, uphold and preserve the NPT. Through its Article VI, the NPT provides the only realistic legal framework to attain a world without nuclear weapons, in a way that promotes international stability based on the principle of undiminished security for all.

Our utmost concern for the catastrophic consequences of the use of nuclear weapons underpins our efforts for effective progress in nuclear disarmament, towards the goal of achieving a peaceful and secure world free of nuclear weapons. A goal we firmly believe can be achieved through a progressive approach, based on concrete measures, resulting in an effective, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament.

In this regard, we recall that Nuclear-weapon States bear fundamental responsibilities for the implementation of disarmament efforts in accordance with Article VI of the

Treaty. We continue to call upon those with the largest arsenals to take concrete steps towards effective nuclear disarmament through further reductions.

We recall the joint statement of the leaders of the five nuclear-weapon states issued in January 2022 affirming that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. Nuclear weapons, for as long as they exist, should only serve defensive purposes, deter aggression and prevent war and coercion.

Italy also emphasizes the importance of transparency with regard to nuclear weapons, especially given the challenging nature of the current international security. We welcome measures already taken by the United States, France and the United Kingdom to promote effective transparency measures through providing data on their nuclear forces and the objective size of their nuclear arsenal and call on others that have not yet done so to follow suit.

Mr. Chair,

Most of the practical and effective measures needed to implement disarmament efforts are already embodied in the relevant actions of the 2010 Action Plan.

Among these, the prompt entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty remains one of our key priorities. As a staunch supporter of the CTBT and in its current capacity of Co-Coordinator of the Article XIV Conference, Italy strongly supports its universalisation and calls upon States that have not yet done so – in particular the remaining eight annex II States – to sign and ratify the Treaty without any further delay. In the meantime, we call upon all States to respect the moratorium on nuclear test explosions and to refrain from any action that could undermine the objectives and purpose of the Treaty.

Another key priority for Italy remains the immediate start of negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament on a Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices on the basis of document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein. Pending its conclusion, all relevant States should abide by a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

We also support the resumption of substantive discussions on Negative Security Assurances, within the context of a comprehensive and balanced program of work, with a view to elaborating recommendations dealing with all their aspects, not excluding an internationally legally binding instrument. In this regard, we also wish to reiterate our support for the establishment of Zones Free of Nuclear Weapons and all other Weapons of Mass Destruction.

Italy also values all initiatives undertaken in the field of nuclear disarmament verification, as important tools to build trust and confidence among nuclear and non-

nuclear weapon States. In this regard, we support the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification.

Mr. Chair,

The deteriorating international environment calls for immediate actions that can avert the use of nuclear weapons and be conducive to a more stable and secure environment. In this regard, Italy would like to express its strong support to strategic and nuclear risk reduction initiatives. Disarmament and strategic and nuclear risk reduction efforts must be pursued in parallel, each reinforcing the other.

Italy stresses the need to maintain effective channels of communication among nuclear-weapon states and to adopt a series of instruments addressing and reducing the range of risks that could lead to the use of nuclear weapons. Increasing predictability through enhanced transparency and clearer nuclear doctrines; strengthening nuclear restraint through a lower operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems (de-alerting); resuming risk-reduction dialogues and information-sharing initiatives. These are only a few of the measures that nuclear-weapons states can pursue to reduce the risk of miscalculations, misunderstandings, and misperceptions that could lead to a nuclear conflict.

Thank you.