



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
and International Cooperation

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

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

Cluster II

**Statement delivered by
Ambassador Leonardo Bencini
Head of the Delegation of Italy
4 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 remains fully committed to effective multilateral action against the proliferation of nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. Despite all the efforts made, the existence of proliferation programs and networks, the difficulty of securing sensitive materials and the risk of terrorists gaining access to them continue to pose major challenges to international security.

The IAEA's system of safeguards - multilateral, impartial, qualified and effective as it is - plays an indispensable role in the implementation of the NPT and remains crucial to ensure the peaceful character of nuclear activities, for the non-proliferation architecture and for our security. Italy supports the IAEA's efforts to implement its system worldwide, based on the current verification standard of a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement together with an Additional Protocol and, as applicable, a modified Small Quantities Protocol.

In this regard, Italy condemns in the strongest possible terms Russia's unjustified and unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine which poses severe and direct threats to the safety and security of Ukraine's nuclear facilities, in particular to the Zaporizhzhya Nuclear power Plant. We fully support the IAEA's and DG Grossi's

efforts to ensure the safety and security of the ZNPP, while fully respecting Ukrainian sovereignty over the plant and the region.

Mr. Chair,

A restored Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA) must be a key priority for the international community. Iran's expansion of its nuclear activities remains deeply concerning. We urge Iran (i) to recede from its activities related to uranium enrichment, stockpiling of nuclear material, together with the further development, at a faster pace, of technical capabilities; (ii) to uphold and fully implement its political commitments in the field of nuclear non-proliferation without further delay; and (iii) to resume all JCPoA-related monitoring and verification measures in order to effectively clarify and resolve all the outstanding safeguards issues without further delay. In this respect, we strongly appreciate all diplomatic efforts meant to prevent a nuclear crisis and to ease tensions in the region, and we commend and continue to fully support the IAEA's crucial mandates and efforts in Iran.

The repeated ballistic missile launches by the DPRK undermine regional and international peace and security and are gravely concerning due to their escalatory nature. We urge the DPRK to refrain from further provocations and threats and to take concrete steps towards a complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization. We therefore call on Pyongyang to engage in credible negotiations in this respect and to comply with relevant UNSC Resolutions, to return to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, to sign and ratify the CTBT and to resume its collaboration with the IAEA. In the meantime, the international sanctions regime needs to remain in place and be effectively implemented, sustaining the negotiating process towards this goal.

Mr. Chair,

Italy highly values the importance of nuclear-weapon-free zones for peace and security, in accordance with the 1999 UN Disarmament Commission guidelines. We therefore commend the contribution of existing nuclear-weapon-free zones to attaining these goals, and call on nuclear weapon States to sign and ratify the relevant protocols of the Treaties establishing such zones.

Italy will continue to support efforts aimed at creating a conducive atmosphere and an inclusive process leading to the establishment of a Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons in the Middle East, on the basis of arrangements freely agreed among all States of the region.

Italy - an active member in all multilateral export control regimes - highly appreciates the contribution made by these regimes to the goal of preventing proliferation. We also underscore the importance of confidence and security building measures in contributing to the global efforts to curb proliferation risks. In this context, we support

the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation as a widely subscribed multilateral instrument that aims at delegitimising and preventing ballistic missile proliferation.

Mr. Chair,

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 regard, we support the full and universal implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004) and its follow-on Resolutions. We underline the importance of the International Convention on the Suppression of Acts on Nuclear Terrorism and encourage all States to become Party to this agreement.

We reaffirm the unique and important contribution of the G7-led, 31-member Global Partnership (GP) Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction.

Italy also deeply values the entry into force of the 2005 Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials, as it enhances the scope of the Convention and expands cooperation among States in countering the risk of nuclear terrorism. We encourage the States Parties to the Convention that have not already done so to ratify the Amendment.

I thank you, Mr Chair.