



Permanent Mission of Italy  
UN - Geneva

**Conference on Disarmament**  
***High Level Segment***

**Statement delivered by Ambassador Leonardo Bencini,  
Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament**

*Geneva, 27 February 2024*

Mister President, Madame Secretary General, Excellencies,

Italy remains deeply concerned at the deteriorating security environment and at the gradual erosion of the disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control architecture.

Yesterday, the Secretary General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, reminded us, in this room, of the need to implement the original mandate of this Conference and to end the paralysis in which it has been for too long now. Italy has always been a staunch supporter of the multilateral system and stands ready to preserve and strengthen this architecture, including by revitalizing or reforming the Conference on Disarmament so that it can go back to fulfilling its original, negotiating mandate.

Italy continues to condemn in the strongest possible terms the Russian Federation's brutal war of aggression against Ukraine, now in its third year. This aggression must stop immediately and Russia must withdraw from all illegally occupied territories in Ukraine. We are also increasingly concerned at Moscow's attempts to obstruct the participation of international organisations and other UN Member States in various disarmament fora. In this context, we strongly deplore the misuse of the consensus rule by the Russian Federation as a veto to block fourteen EU Member States and candidate countries from taking part in the works of the Conference on Disarmament as observers. Excluding an entire region from this body is unprecedented and constitutes an unwarranted attack on the principle of inclusivity and dialogue.

Mr. President,

Italy shares the goal of a peaceful and secure world completely free of nuclear weapons, in line with article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. At the same time, we have to recognize that, in spite of nonproliferation efforts, the global threat from the spread of nuclear weapons remains very real.

Italy urges Iran to return to the full implementation of all its obligations under the JCPoA. We also call on Iran to ensure full and transparent cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

We are seriously concerned about the irresponsible behavior of the DPRK, which today represents a serious threat to international peace and security. We urge the DPRK to refrain from further provocations and to take concrete steps towards a complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization.

Yesterday we heard from the Executive Secretary of the CTBTO, Robert Floyd, how important and effective the International Monitoring System is. As a staunch supporter of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and former co-coordinator of the Article XIV Conference, Italy urges all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the CTBT without further delay.

After more than thirty years since the first UN Resolution on a Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices was approved, it is time to break this deadlock and start negotiating this Treaty. We understand the concerns of some delegations on this particular question but we believe there could be ways to take those concerns into consideration. Starting a negotiation does not in itself prejudge its outcome. There should be a certain level of flexibility that would allow us to move forward, at the same time safeguarding the legitimate interest of any given Member State.

We believe that there is an urgent need to improve space security in an increasingly congested, contested and competitive outer space environment. We are ready to continue working with all interested parties to reduce space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behavior.

I thank you, Mr. President.