



Permanent Mission of Italy to the  
Conference on Disarmament

**Conference on Disarmament**  
**Thematic Debate on Transparency in Armaments**

*Geneva, 30 May 2024*

Mister President,

We thank you for this debate and thank the panel for the very stimulating presentations. We were in particular interested in the contribution that open-source intelligence and civil society can bring by helping to put all governments, and not just the governments of the countries where they freely operate, in a position to be more transparent and more accountable on these issues.

Italy considers transparency an essential step to advance nuclear disarmament. Transparency helps build confidence and trust among States and therefore it fosters dialogue and negotiation on concrete and effective measures. Transparency is recognised as one of the three main principles of the Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) along with verification and irreversibility. Under Action 2 of the 2010 Action Plan all States Parties commit to apply the principles of irreversibility, verification and transparency in relation to the implementation of their Treaty obligations. Under action 5 the Nuclear Weapons States (NWS) commit to accelerate concrete progress on the steps leading to nuclear disarmament in a way that promotes international stability, peace and undiminished and increased security. More specifically, nuclear-weapon States are called upon to enhance transparency and increase mutual confidence.

Looking at nuclear disarmament in a practical manner, we see how these three elements are closely intertwined: transparency alone cannot result in nuclear disarmament; verification cannot be carried out without transparency; irreversibility cannot be guaranteed without transparency and verification.

In July 2023, we were encouraged by the proposals presented and discussed in the Working Group on the further strengthening of the NPT Review Process. Although we did

not reach consensus in the end, these proposals gathered broad support. We particularly looked with interest at the proposal for Nuclear-weapon States to present at each Preparatory Committee national reports focused on the implementation of art. VI obligations, the 2010 Action Plan and the Thirteen Practical Steps, with the opportunity for those States to engage in an interactive discussion. We would also welcome the development of a “standard reporting form” containing detailed information on type and deployment of nuclear weapons; number and categories of launchers; measures undertaken to prevent any use of nuclear weapons and the strengthening of negative security assurances.

Italy thinks we should build on the work that we started a year ago in Vienna with a view to enhancing the quality and the consistency in reporting. This is something that the Preparatory Committee should continue engaging on with the aim of submitting recommendations to the 2026 NPT Review Conference.

Mr President,

Italy welcomes measures already taken by France, the United Kingdom and the United States to promote effective transparency through publication of 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. The dialogue on transparency within the so-called P5 process should also be maintained and enhanced.

Italy welcomes other initiatives aimed at increasing transparency through verification, show-casing successful work achieved by the cooperation of Nuclear-weapon States and Non-nuclear-weapon States on complex technical verification issues. In this context, we also welcome the consensus conclusions adopted by the UN Group of Governmental Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification and view with interest the initiative by Brazil and Norway to table a resolution on the establishment of a Group of Scientific and Technical Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification at the next session of the UNGA First Committee, as mentioned a few minutes ago by the Brazilian Ambassador.

Transparency also entails reporting and accountability towards the international community at large and within individual countries as well. Transparency is a feature of democratic societies and is in fact enhanced by the control exercised by Parliaments and civil society alike. Transparency presupposes respect for international norms, freedom of academic research and NGOs activities. Academic research has over the last years rekindled its traditional work on transparency and nuclear disarmament thanks to broader access to open-source information and satellite imagery, developing relevant thinking on how to

address complex challenges related to advancing nuclear disarmament. This is also why we think it is crucially important to guarantee the presence of representatives from civil society in our deliberations, and in that respect we very much welcome the composition of today's panel.

We are aware, Mr. President, that these challenges are becoming increasingly difficult to tackle when existing multilateral transparency mechanisms are facing the challenges posed by disruptive emerging technologies. Just as an example, experts have pointed out that 3-d printing and additive manufacturing may facilitate the production of items prohibited under the NPT or present compliance challenges under art. II of the NPT. But certain technologies may provide new and more sophisticated verification mechanisms to increase transparency, I refer in particular to research conducted on blockchain and the potential use of cryptography.

Thank you for your attention.