



Delegation of Italy to  
the Conference on Disarmament  
Geneva

**Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)  
Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 11th Review Conference  
Geneva, 22 July – 2 August 2024**

**General Statement delivered by  
Ambassador Leonardo Bencini  
Head of the Delegation of Italy  
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Chair,

Allow me to congratulate you on the assumption of your duties as Chair. You can count on Italy's support.

Italy fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union. I will make some additional remarks in my national capacity.

Chair,

Since the first session of the Preparatory Committee, the international security context has further deteriorated, putting additional strain on an already weakened multilateral disarmament machinery. Italy believes that it is precisely in historical moments such as this that dialogue must be preserved and mutual trust restored to the maximum extent possible. There is no alternative to the multilateral system and no alternative to the NPT, that we consider the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and an essential component of nuclear disarmament efforts. We call for the full implementation of all the commitments undertaken during the Review Conferences, in particular the 2010 Action Plan.

In spite of diverging positions on several points, we still believe there are areas where consensus can be achieved, as was evident at the X Review Conference, two years ago, when the Russian Federation blocked consensus on the draft Final document. After two Review Conferences without a substantive final document, it is imperative, and it should be every delegation's priority, that this process be put back on a consensual track. We call on every delegation to show the maximum flexibility possible to allow our deliberations to proceed towards that goal.

Chair,

Some commentators maintain that we have entered a new nuclear age. After the Cold War, after its end and the mutual trust that allowed massive reductions in nuclear arsenals, we might be on the cusp of a new nuclear arms race. This is why we stand with the principle last reaffirmed just over two and a half years ago by the five nuclear-weapon States that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. The corollary to this affirmation is that nuclear weapons must be eliminated. Italy believes that this is what we should strive towards – a world completely free of nuclear weapons and of the nightmare of nuclear annihilation.

Italy believes that complete nuclear disarmament can be achieved through a progressive, realistic, pragmatic and responsible approach, based on concrete measures and an effective, verifiable and irreversible process. The NPT provides the only realistic legal framework to reach this objective, in a way that promotes international stability based on the principle of undiminished security for all.

We welcome transparency measures already taken by France, the United Kingdom and the United States. Most recently, we welcome the decision by the United States to declassify the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile totals from September 2021 through September 2023. We call on others to show the same level of transparency.

Italy would like to express its strong support to strategic and nuclear risk reduction initiatives. Far from being a substitute for nuclear disarmament, risk reduction is a necessary tool to, among other things, build trust and foster a climate conducive to disarmament negotiations. Nuclear risk reduction can pave the way for disarmament and should be pursued in parallel with it, each reinforcing the other.

Italy maintains that nuclear weapons, for as long as they exist, should only serve defensive purposes, deter aggression and prevent war and coercion. The Apulia G7 Leaders' summit under Italian presidency condemned in the strongest possible terms

Russia's irresponsible and threatening nuclear rhetoric, as well as its posture of strategic intimidation, including its announced deployment of nuclear weapons in Belarus.

Chair,

The prompt entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty remains one of our key priorities. During Italy's co-Presidency of the Conference on Article XIV, eight new countries acceded to the Treaty. We call upon States that have not yet done so – in particular the now nine 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.

Italy is glad to have joined a cross-regional group of friends of the FMCT together with Japan and other countries. We look forward to working within this group to give new impetus to the goal of starting negotiations on an FMCT without delay. We also look forward to the discussions to be conducted within the recently established Subsidiary Body 2 of the Conference on Disarmament.

Chair,

Nuclear proliferation risks are 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 also seriously concerned at the irresponsible behaviour of the DPRK, which 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.

I thank you, Chair.