



**First Committee of the 79th UN General Assembly  
Cluster VII – Disarmament Machinery**

**Statement by H.E. Leonardo Bencini  
Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament**

**New York, 29 October 2024**

Chair,

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

Chair,

We are deeply concerned at the continued erosion of the international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. One country in particular, the Russian Federation, is systematically attacking the multilateral system, that same system that in the past, even during the Cold War, it had contributed to build. After its brutal full-scale invasion of Ukraine, with every single decision Russia has chipped away at the disarmament architecture. Fortunately, the vast majority of UN member States have a different approach, as the final phases of the negotiations of the Pact for the Future amply demonstrated.

As a staunch supporter of the multilateral system, Italy welcomed the adoption of the Pact for the Future and its emphasis on disarmament as an integral component of the UN peace and security pillar. With Action 26, States commit to revitalize the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, including by recommending that the General Assembly pursue work that could support preparation of a fourth special session devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV). Italy

has long supported the idea of convening an SSOD-IV, at the appropriate time and with modalities to be defined, and welcomes a debate on this.

While it is, at this point in time, unrealistic to embark on a wide restructuring of the disarmament machinery, we believe that we should at least begin to discuss the feasibility of certain ideas so that, when the time comes, we will be prepared, if we so agree, to implement them. Italy believes that, first of all, we should aim to harmonise and streamline the entire disarmament machinery. To begin with, we should look at the respective mandates of the Conference on Disarmament and the UN Disarmament Commission and review them accordingly to create a coherent system, while bearing in mind the different nature of these two bodies – respectively, a negotiating body and a deliberative one.

Italy looks forward to its Presidency of the Conference on Disarmament in January 2025 and to working with the other Presidents in the P6+2 format, a configuration that has proved effective in ensuring collective decision-making and continuity both in 2023 and 2024. This year in particular that continuity has taken the form of a decision on the establishment of five Subsidiary Bodies that will have substantive meetings in 2025. We think this is a positive development that will hopefully inject new vitality in the works of the CD. We deeply regretted however that 15 EU member States and candidate countries were this year blocked by the Russian Federation from participating as observers in the CD. This goes against the principle of inclusivity that we strongly defend and indeed against the multilateral method that should guide our work.

We also favour greater interaction between the General Assembly and this Committee and the CD. The CD should take in full and serious consideration the recommendations emanating from the General Assembly. On the other hand, the General Assembly should pay more attention and consideration to the reports of the CD. The Chairs of the First committee, the Disarmament Commission and the various OEWGs and GGEs could brief the CD on the works of the respective bodies in interactive meetings. Furthermore, every disarmament body should interact more and better with the rest of the UN system but also with civil society and the private sector.

Chair,

Italy wishes to highlight the seriousness of the financial difficulties affecting the Disarmament conventions that hamper the proper functioning of the disarmament machinery. While we are open to any new proposal or measure to

ensure financially sound management, we believe that there is one simple solution and that is for every country to pay its dues in full and on time. This is a legal obligation.

Across all these issues, Italy believes that greater interaction with civil society will bring a key contribution to the entire Disarmament machinery. Italy promotes policies and approaches that enable the full empowerment of women and take into due regard the gendered impacts of armed violence and the importance of including women in disarmament negotiations and peacebuilding programs.

I thank you, Chair.