



Mission of Italy to the
Conference on Disarmament
Geneva

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

Just over a month ago, the President of the Republic of Italy, Sergio Mattarella, was in Hiroshima, where he met the 2024 Nobel Peace Prize recipients, the survivors of the atomic bombings, the Hibakusha. On that occasion, President Mattarella said that “the atrocity of those moments (...) contributed to forming an international consensus around a moral imperative: that atomic bombs should never be used again. That horrific incident gave new momentum to the debate on disarmament [and to the] Non-Proliferation Treaty.”

Chair,

Italy stands with the principle 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 maintains that these weapons, for as long as they exist, should only serve defensive purposes, deter aggression and prevent war and coercion.

Italy believes that we should strive towards a world completely free of nuclear weapons and of the nightmare of nuclear annihilation. 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.

There is no alternative to the multilateral system and no alternative to the NPT. We should now renew our efforts 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. After two Review Conferences without a substantive final document – and two meetings of the PrepCom without an agreed Summary – it should be every delegation's priority to put this process back on a consensual track.

Among the topics on which we see growing convergence are the measures to strengthen the review process and enhance transparency and accountability. In this respect, we welcome the transparent approach by France, the United Kingdom and the United States on their respective nuclear arsenals and call on other nuclear-weapon countries to follow suit.

Italy would like to express its strong support to strategic and nuclear risk reduction initiatives. Nuclear risk reduction, in fact, can pave the way for disarmament and should be pursued in parallel with it, each reinforcing the other.

Chair,

Far from being against the spirit or even the letter of the NPT, nuclear sharing arrangements have prevented proliferation in that they have removed incentives for States in a nuclear alliance to develop their own deterrence. In the fifty-five years since the NPT came into force, not one single country in the NATO alliance has gone nuclear.

We can therefore with confidence state that these arrangements have contributed to one of the Treaty's main goals.

Chair,

The prompt entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty remains one of our key priorities. We call upon States that have not yet done so – in particular the nine annex II States – to sign and ratify the Treaty without any further delay. In the meantime, we call upon all States to continue 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 are working within this group to give new impetus to the goal of starting negotiations on an FMCT without delay.

Finally, Chair, it was with great pleasure that last January, during Italy's Presidency of the Conference of Disarmament, five subsidiary bodies were established. It was the first time since 1996 that such a decision was adopted in January, and it was only the fourth time it was adopted at all in all these years. Subsidiary body 1, 2 and 4 all deal with nuclear issues. We are pleased with the frank and open tone of the debates so far and hope that these SBs can further their work and agree on a report at the end of this year's CD session.

Thank you, Chair.