



**Statement delivered by
Ambassador Leonardo Bencini,
Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament
to the First Committee of the 80th UN General Assembly
General Debate**

New York, 15 October 2025

Chair,

Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union. I will now add some remarks in my national capacity.

We gather this year as the United Nations marks its eightieth anniversary amid a gravely deteriorated security context. It is a trend that we have witnessed in the last few years and that requires renewed commitment on our part to reverse. The multilateral disarmament machinery that we have built over decades must now be preserved and protected against all threats.

Chief among those threats, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine but also its unacceptable nuclear sabre-rattling, that we continue to condemn in the strongest terms. Earlier this year, as in 2024, Moscow vetoed the participation of 15 EU member States and candidate countries as observers in the Conference on Disarmament (CD). This was an unprecedented affront to the multilateral system and the principle of inclusivity.

Chair,

We commend President Trump's negotiating efforts and the mediation of Egypt, Qatar, and Turkey, which led to the signing on Monday in Sharm El-Sheikh of the first phase of the peace plan. The cessation of hostilities, the release of the hostages and the resumption of humanitarian aid are crucial steps, as we now look to the longer term. Italy stands ready to participate in an international stabilisation mission and to contribute to Gaza's reconstruction, sparing no effort to achieve the two-state solution as the only path to lasting peace.

Chair,

Italy shares the goal of a peaceful and secure world completely free of nuclear weapons. Article VI of the NPT provides the necessary legal framework. There is no alternative instrument to the NPT. In under seven months we will gather here for its XI Review Conference. The previous Conference and the meetings of the Preparatory Committee have clearly shown how difficult it is to find agreement on a broad range of issues. In fact, consensus has been elusive the past fifteen years. Italy believes that we should now find the right balance between ambition and realism. The Review Conference should provide an opportunity for all States parties to recommit to the core goals and principles of the NPT.

As a staunch supporter of the CTBT, Italy urges all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Treaty without further delay and, in the meantime, to respect the moratorium on nuclear tests. It is also time we started long-overdue negotiations on an FMCT in the CD.

Italy believes that Iran should never possess nuclear weapons and urges Teheran to return to full and unhindered cooperation with the IAEA and to the negotiating table. All enriched fissile material must be accounted for. It is imperative to find a diplomatic way forward. We are also seriously concerned at the irresponsible behaviour of the DPRK, which represents a serious threat to international peace and security. We urge Pyongyang to take concrete steps towards a complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization.

Chair,

Almost three years ago, the main result of the IX Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention was the establishment of a working group to strengthen it. We now have a concrete and attainable goal before us: to adopt the two mechanisms respectively on international cooperation and assistance and on science and technology. This should be done at a Special Conference to be convened in August 2026, as proposed by the Chair of the Working Group. That Special conference should also chart the way forward on compliance and verification by establishing a separate working group to address exclusively this crucial aspect.

The military use of new and emerging technologies is becoming a priority issue. We support the ongoing work of the GGE on LAWS and are heartened to see that the two-tier approach is gaining traction. The eventual goal of this process should be the adoption of a Protocol to the CCW. We also believe that the time has come to discuss the broader issue of military applications of new technologies, in particular AI, and to identify the right forum to do this.

Italy remains strongly committed to supporting the CWC and the work of the OPCW. We strongly condemn any use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anyone, under any circumstances.

Outer space security remains a top priority for us. The Open-ended working group has started substantive work last July. We view the behavioural and the capabilities approaches as complementary in addressing the same threats. As far as the normative framework is concerned, Italy believes that urgent and serious consideration should be given to the idea of a legally binding instrument banning direct-ascent, anti-satellite tests in outer Space.

Chair,

During Italy's presidency of the Conference on Disarmament earlier this year five subsidiary bodies were established to deal with the main topic on the CD's agenda. It was the first time since 1996 that such a decision was taken in January, and the sixth time that it was taken at all during the same period. While we regret that the subsidiary bodies were unable to agree on

a report, our assessment of this year's session is not entirely negative. Delegations actively engaged in intensive debates and their work could form the basis for renewed discussions next year in a spirit of continuity. Many complain that the CD is in a deadlock. It is true, but it is also true that this is not the CD's fault – this is the result of deep divisions at the international level and of the abuse of the consensus rule. While we wait for the right conditions to restart our negotiating role, we should not renounce this opportunity to exchange views and seek common ground. This is all we have now, but it is important to safeguard it.

Chair,

The Ottawa Convention on Anti-Personnel Mines and the Oslo Convention on Cluster Munitions, two core humanitarian and disarmament treaties, are facing unprecedented challenges. In Italy's view, increasing international tension and conflicts make the imperative of a world free of anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions even more urgent and we renew our support to the principles and objectives enshrined in the Conventions and to their universalization.

Across all these issues, Italy highly values greater interaction with civil society and a gender perspective as a key contribution to our work.

I thank you, Chair.