



**Statement by H. E. Ambassador Gianfranco Incarnato**  
**Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament**  
*Geneva, 29 January 2019*

Mr. President,

Thank you for giving me the floor. At the outset, let me congratulate you on the assumption of your responsibility as the first President of the 2019 session of the Conference on Disarmament. Please rest assured of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

Italy aligns itself with the statement of the European Union. Let me add some remarks in my national capacity.

Mr. President,

Italy firmly believes that multilateralism and international cooperation are crucial for effective and long-term results in disarmament and non-proliferation. We remain engaged in promoting these values and approaches in all relevant fora. The current security situation – characterized by growing tensions, arms proliferation, and a fast-changing environment – adds a new sense of urgency to our efforts.

The Conference on Disarmament is the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating body and its role remains crucial.

We fully understand and share the sense of frustration stemming from the long impasse in the Conference's work, which is regrettable.

We remain convinced that the CD is an indispensable and unique body in the toolbox of the disarmament community, even though its potential remains clearly unfulfilled nowadays. It is up to us to act in order to preserve and relaunch its role.

Italy appreciated the constructive and substantive discussions held last year in the five subsidiary bodies to reach an understanding on the areas of commonalities, deepen technical discussions and broaden areas of agreement and consider effective measures, including legal instruments for negotiations.

We commend the coordinators for their efforts and leadership in bringing forward this important work, in accordance with the mandate of the subsidiary bodies.

The adoption of four substantive reports for the first time in years is an important step forward and can provide a solid basis to build on in 2019.

At the same time, we regret that the Conference could not agree on a substantive final Report, that would have been of the utmost importance in order to reflect the important work that was carried out in the five subsidiary bodies.

Mr. President,

We look forward to your proposal on a Programme of Work and support your efforts to reach an agreement on it. For Italy, the immediate resumption of negotiations within the CD remains a priority. At the same time, should it not be possible to find consensus on a Programme of Work, Italy would support the re-establishment of subsidiary bodies so as to allow further structured and technical discussions throughout the 2019 session.

Mr. President,

Italy fully shares the goal of a peaceful and secure world free of nuclear weapons, and is firmly committed to disarmament, arms control, and non-proliferation as essential components of its foreign policy.

In this regard, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) remains the cornerstone of the international regime, with its three mutually reinforcing pillars: non-proliferation, disarmament and promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We call upon States that have not yet done so to join the NPT as non-nuclear weapon States, without delay and without conditions.

The prompt entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is also one of our key priorities. We call on all States that have not yet done so, particularly the remaining eight Annex-2 States, to sign and ratify the Treaty without further delay.

We continue to support the immediate commencement of negotiations within the CD on a Treaty dealing with fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We welcome the report of the High Level Expert Preparatory Group established by UNGA Resolution 71/259. We believe it would be important to build on the Group's work and enrich with its fruitful inputs our negotiations of such a treaty within the CD. Pending its conclusion, we believe that all relevant States should abide by a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

We also support the resumption of substantive discussions on Negative Security Assurances, within the context of a comprehensive and balanced program of work, with a view to elaborating recommendations dealing with all their aspects, not excluding an internationally legally binding instrument.

Nuclear weapon States bear fundamental responsibilities for the implementation of Art. VI of the NPT. While welcoming the reductions made so far by most of them, we encourage them to seek further reductions in their nuclear arsenals. We express satisfaction at the announcement by the Russian Federation and the United States that they met the central limits of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) in February 2018. We encourage them to extend the Treaty and to pursue further discussions on confidence-building, transparency, verification activities and reporting.

For over 30 years, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty has been crucial in upholding European security. Today, we are seriously concerned about the future of the Treaty and we believe that no effort should be spared to preserve it and to ensure its full and verifiable implementation. We therefore call upon Russia to demonstrate its compliance with the Treaty in a substantial and transparent way.

Italy also values all initiatives undertaken in the field of nuclear disarmament verification, as important tools to build trust and confidence among nuclear and non-nuclear weapon States. In this regard, we support the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification and welcome the work of the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament.

Mr. President,

Also in light of the increasing tendency to bring disarmament negotiations outside the CD, today more than ever we face the concrete risk of the marginalization of the Conference, and ultimately of its irrelevance. At the same time, the deteriorating security environment calls for renewed determination to advance our shared disarmament goals and adds a new sense of urgency to our efforts.

We are aware of the extremely positive results we can achieve when diplomacy works. After a deeply troubling 2017, when DPRK's nuclear and missile tests ruthlessly threatened international peace and security, as well as the non-proliferation regime, in the first half of 2018 the high-level talks between the Republic of Korea and the DPRK, together with the Singapore Summit between the US and the DPRK, brought about positive developments. We strongly hope that such steps may be conducive to an open and constructive dialogue, aimed at fulfilling our common goal of a complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Another important example of the results that can be achieved through diplomacy is the JCPoA. This agreement remains a key element in the context of international efforts aiming to strengthen the non-proliferation architecture, and plays a crucial role in promoting regional and international security.

We firmly believe that the international community needs to remain committed to a full and effective implementation of the Plan of Action, as long as Iran continues to strictly abide by its nuclear-related commitments. We also reiterate the importance of a full and effective implementation of Security Council Resolution 2231.

Before concluding, Mr. President,

Allow me to stress once again that my Country stands ready to work with all partners to advance disarmament goals and values, in the CD and in all other relevant fora, starting from the upcoming Third Preparatory Committee of the 2020 Review Conference of the NPT.

Further, Italy believes that greater interaction of the CD with civil society – broadly encompassing academia, NGOs, and the private sector – could make a key contribution to our work, as testified, for example, by the very useful input provided by experts to last year’s subsidiary bodies, which helped deepen our technical discussions and substantively enriched our debate.

Thank you.