



ITALY

2019 NPT PREPARATORY COMMITTEE

CLUSTER III

STATEMENT BY

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**PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ITALY
TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT**

New York, 29 APRIL - 10 MAY 2019

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Mr. Chairman,

Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union. I wish to add some considerations in my national capacity.

Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Technologies and Applications and Technical Cooperation

Article IV of the NPT acknowledges the right of all Parties “to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes” and to benefit from international cooperation in this area, in conformity with their non-proliferation obligations. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) plays a key role in furthering such cooperation, thus also contributing to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals set by the UN 2030 Agenda.

Italy highly values the technical assistance and cooperation programs implemented by the Agency and has provided its full contribution to the Technical Cooperation Fund in 2018 and also for the current year, with a yearly share of over 3 million Euros. Additional voluntary contributions are being considered to support projects jointly carried out by the IAEA and the FAO to fulfill specific needs of Least Developed Countries. A further specific support in this respect has been recently provided by making available to the joint IAEA/FAO division an Associate Immunology Officer for a period of two years.

Our commitment to technical assistance and peaceful uses is also confirmed by the large number of scholarships and training programs that we offer for citizens of developing countries. In this respect, I would like to recall, in particular, the activities of the Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) in Trieste, which operates under a tripartite agreement between the Italian Government, the IAEA and the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), with the specific mission of advancing scientific expertise in the developing world. For more than 50 years, the ICTP has been a driving force to educate alumni who have consequently served in their home countries in nuclear-related sectors. As a concrete example, let me recall the two-year Master of Advanced Studies in Medical Physics jointly run by the ICTP and the University of Trieste, which enables young graduates to become clinical medical physicists, and the Joint ICTP-IAEA international school, supported by Italy, to foster a nuclear security culture and the secure use of nuclear applications. Additionally, every year Italy hosts about fifty foreign researchers in its laboratories, universities and medical centers, in the framework of fellowships and scientific visits financed under the Agency’s Technical Cooperation Programme.

Italy is also working to develop safe and secure peaceful uses of nuclear technologies and applications in several fields.

In the field of agricultural and animal-health nuclear applications, Italy has been providing a significant contribution to international research and development activities. For instance, the Centro Agricoltura Ambiente “G. Nicoli” in Bologna has been for years an IAEA Collaborating Centre in the development and implementation of a Sterile Insect Technique package for Aedes Mosquitoes suppression. Moreover, at ENEA (the Italian National Agency for New Technologies, Energy and Sustainable Economic Development) a laboratory on analytical traceability has recently been established, where isotopic and radiometric studies are carried out to enhance food safety and security and meet the consumers’ needs by monitoring the agro-food supply chain and tracking the geographical origin of food.

We are also particularly proud of our efforts for the advancement of nuclear medicine and the sustainability of radioisotope production through various initiatives, such as, recently, the project for the production of technetium isotopes for diagnostic purposes at the ENEA TRIGA reactor in Rome and the program of studies on Boron Neutron Capture Therapy (BNCT) and on copper isotope production for theranostics application at the LENA TRIGA Reactor of Pavia University. In this connection, last February ENEA approved a three-year project for the production of Molybdenum-99 solutions at the local level. The National Institute for Nuclear Physics (INFN), is also focusing on state-of-the-art nuclear applications, such as radiotherapy with beams of protons and heavier nuclei and accelerator-based alternatives to Uranium-based production of radioisotopes of medical interest.

Finally, my country is actively engaged in advancing research on fusion and innovative nuclear systems. In this context, construction work for the Divertor Tokamak Test Facility (DTT), the international center of excellence for nuclear fusion research to be built by ENEA in collaboration with European and international partners, has already started. The DTT aims at meeting some of the greatest challenges posed by fusion, with the objective of creating a connecting link between the international nuclear fusion project ITER and the reactor DEMO.

Research activities are also conducted by Italian institutes and companies on nuclear data, innovative nuclear systems, including systems for radioactive waste management, and methods and technologies to strengthen nuclear safeguards, safety and security.

Italy indeed believes that any project involving nuclear energy, as well as any technology or application making use of radioactive materials, should integrate elements of safeguards, safety, security, emergency preparedness and response. Only such synergies can grant a long-lasting sustainable approach, as well as the actual well-being and protection of both the population and the environment.

The IAEA can offer a substantial contribution in this respect.

Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy and IAEA Safeguards

By “preventing diversion of nuclear energy from peaceful uses to nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices” as Article III.1 of the NPT states, the IAEA’s system of safeguards – multilateral, impartial, qualified and effective as it is – is one of the core components of the NPT and a fundamental insurance for our security.

Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements together with Additional Protocols represent the current verification standard. Their universalization must be pursued without delay, as a means conducive to mutual trust and as a necessary step forward towards a purely peaceful use of nuclear energy and applications. The effectiveness of the safeguards system can be further strengthened through a consistent and universal application of State Level Approaches, whose development Italy continues to support.

Against this backdrop, we wish to recall the crucial role that the JCPOA is playing to ensure the exclusively peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear program. In this regard, Italy is contributing to the EU initiatives established in the context of JCPOA to support the Iranian Nuclear Regulatory Authority.

The comprehensive verification and monitoring activities performed by the IAEA under the JCPOA, including through the complementary accesses conducted under the Additional Protocol, have provided constant evidence of Teheran's compliance with its nuclear-related commitments. We invite Iran to ratify without delay the Additional Protocol that it is already provisionally applying.

Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy and Nuclear Safety

Following two referenda, Italy decided to abandon its nuclear energy program and is consequently engaged in the decommissioning of its nuclear facilities, which is carried out by the Italian State company SO.G.I.N., in compliance with the highest international safety and security standards.

The decommissioning of nuclear facilities is a complex process, consisting of many interrelated activities (such as radiological characterization, decontamination, dismantling of equipment, facilities and buildings, disposal of radioactive waste and materials etc.) which require highly developed skills, know-how and technological specializations so as to guarantee its conformity to the most stringent safety and security standards.

In the last two years the Agency conducted two reviews in Italy in the framework of the Integrated Review Service for Radioactive Waste and Spent Fuel Management, Decommissioning and Remediation (ARTEMIS). After a first review of the whole national program for decommissioning and radioactive waste management in 2017, a second ARTEMIS mission was conducted last year to review the specific dismantling strategies and technologies identified by SO.G.I.N. for Trino and Garigliano, two of the four Italian nuclear power plants currently under decommissioning. Both ARTEMIS Peer Reviews provided new perspectives on our activities and very useful recommendations, while confirming that SO.G.I.N.'s approach is appropriate and the techniques and technologies utilized are well tested and effective. The international team also identified good practices which we are willing to share with other countries facing similar challenges.

In August 2018 the new National Inspectorate for nuclear safety and radiation protection (ISIN) became fully operational as the new national competent regulatory authority, strengthened in its power, independence, financial and human resources. This institutional change is a concrete pillar in the process to implement the 2016 IRRS (*Integrated Regulatory Review Service*) mission recommendations.

Italy is a party to the main international conventions in the field of nuclear safety, and presented its National Report at the 6th Review Meeting of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management in 2018. With a view to exploring means to improve efficiency and effectiveness of peer review processes in the Joint Convention, Italy is looking forward to the 4th Extraordinary Meeting of its Contracting Parties that will take place in May 2020.

We call on all countries that have or intend to develop a nuclear power program to adhere to the relevant international conventions in the field of nuclear safety. In this regard, Italy remains fully committed to the implementation of the Code of Conduct on the safety and security of radioactive sources and its supplementary guidance.

Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy and Nuclear Security

Ensuring the highest levels of nuclear security is a shared interest of the international community to be pursued both by each State at national level and through international cooperation. The application of the highest standards of nuclear security has proven instrumental for the acceptance and development of nuclear technologies and their applications, as it increases confidence in their legitimate use for exclusively peaceful purposes.

Having actively participated in the high-level political dialogue of the Nuclear Security Summits, Italy has shown its commitment to promoting a nuclear security culture, by financing, through voluntary extra-budgetary contributions to the IAEA's Nuclear Security Fund, the Joint ICTP-IAEA International School on Nuclear Security, which takes place once a year at the International Center for Theoretical Physics in Trieste. At its 9th year of activity, the School has trained more than 500 young professionals from developing countries and serves as a model for IAEA regional schools.

For over twenty years, Italy has also supported the work at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant, in partnership with fellow Governments, and with the Italian industry playing a pivotal role in the projects' delivery. The nearing completion of these projects will allow Ukraine – for the first time since the 1986 accident – to address the long-term decommissioning of the site in a safe and secure manner.

After the 2016 Nuclear Security Summit in Washington, Italy has joined the Nuclear Security Contact Group (NSCG) and actively participates in its work. We encourage those States that have not already done so to join the NSCG, as it can contribute to focus engagement within the IAEA. We strongly support the central role of the IAEA in the global nuclear security framework and we encourage all States to fulfill their nuclear security responsibilities.

Furthermore, we take part in the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT) and in other relevant international and European initiatives, also within the broader scope of CBRNE.

Finally, Italy has ratified the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM) and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT) and urges those States that have not yet done so to ratify both Conventions. The implementation of these instruments is as important as their universalization. The IAEA should play a leadership role in both regards, contributing to building capacity in the States that need it most.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you for your attention.