



Permanent Mission of Italy
UN - Geneva

Conference on Disarmament Opening Statement

Geneva, 21 January 2020

**delivered by H.E. Ambassador Gianfranco Incarnato,
Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament**

Mister 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 2020 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.

Mister President,

The international scenario which is currently under our eyes is deeply concerning, with heightened international and regional tensions. Given the situation, we need to remember to ourselves the special responsibility that we bear in this augustus body. It is urgent that we act with determination. We need a collective renewed commitment towards preserving international institutions and instruments, and guaranteeing their proper functioning, not to enter the path of a new arms race.

In these times, effective multilateralism and a rules-based international system are the only path to success. For this reason, Italy reiterates its firm commitment for multilateralism and international cooperation as crucial tools for effective and long-term results in disarmament and non-proliferation.

We remain engaged in promoting these values, especially in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament, whose role is crucial as it is the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating body.

We fully understand and share the sense of frustration stemming from the long impasse in the Conference's work, which is regrettable. At the same time, 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. In these sense, we commend the cooperation set between the six Presidencies of this year. Moreover, we are very much in favor of the possibility to opt for a more pragmatic approach, as proposed in 2019 by the Netherlands, without protracted procedural debates and with substantive work in so many important areas of discussion instead.

Mister President,

Italy reaffirms its firm commitment to disarmament and international security, in particular sharing the goal of a peaceful and secure world free of nuclear weapons. Our efforts for effective progress on nuclear disarmament are underpinned by our utmost concern for the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons' use

In this regard, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) remains the cornerstone of the international disarmament regime, with its three mutually reinforcing pillars: nonproliferation, disarmament and promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear technology. In the year of the 50th anniversary of its entry into force and with the approaching Review Conference, the Treaty must be supported, upheld and preserved, especially in today's difficult environment. We therefore invite States that have not yet done so to join the Treaty 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. 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.

Mister President,

Nuclear-weapon States bear fundamental responsibilities for the implementation of Art. VI of the NPT. While welcoming the reductions made so far, we encourage them to seek further reductions in their nuclear arsenals and to actively engage in strengthening the entire disarmament architecture. In this respect we particularly encourage the United States and the Russian Federation to seek further reductions to their arsenals and to engage in a constructive dialogue on New START Treaty extension post-2021 and on other arms control arrangements as well as to pursue further discussions on confidence-building, transparency, verification activities, and reporting.

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.

Mister President,

Italy remains convinced that preserving the JCPoA is still in the interest of all, as a key pillar of the global non-proliferation architecture and a crucial contribution to regional stability. We are deeply concerned by Iran's latest announcements and previous decisions to reduce its commitments under the JCPoA. We urge Iran to return to full compliance without delay. We are aware of the extremely positive results we can achieve when diplomacy works.

We also fully support further negotiations between the US and the DPRK for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. We regret the stalemate this process is now undergoing. We urge the DPRK to show actual commitment to diplomatic dialogue and to give concrete proof of its asserted willingness to denuclearize, by refraining from provocations and threats, returning to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), signing and ratifying the CTBT and promptly resuming its collaboration with the IAEA, including by signing, ratifying and implementing an Additional Protocol. We believe that international sanctions against the DPRK must remain in force to sustain the current negotiating process. At the present juncture, it is imperative to remain focused on implementing them. A durable collective commitment remains necessary.

Mister 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.

To conclude, 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, helping to deep our technical discussions and substantively enriching our debate.

Thank you, Mister President.