



Permanent Mission of Italy
UN - Geneva

Conference on Disarmament

Agenda items 5, 6 and 6

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Mister President,

Since this is the first time my Delegation takes the floor, let me congratulate you on the assumption of the Presidency of the Conference and assure you of our full support and cooperation.

We are grateful for having the possibility to resume a discussion on substantive items of the Conference's Agenda, even if unfortunately this year we have not been in a position to structure a comprehensive discussion on all the priorities of our work, as it was envisaged by the Australian Presidency together with the P6 before the spread of the pandemics.

We have listen with great interest to the contribution of the panelists, today, and let me express our special gratitude to the Director of UNIDIR, Ms. Renata Dwan. We have appreciated her wise leadership at the head of the Institute, helping us to explore ideas and to develop new thinking on ways to address opportunities as well as challenges to international security and disarmament. UNIDIR's Security and Technology Programme is conducting a brilliant work and we wish to encourage the experts to continue in this endeavors.

Mister President,

Italy is well aware that the current security environment puts us in front of new and emerging issues, alongside traditional ones as captured by the core agenda items of the CD agenda. We welcome continued discussions on items 5, 6 and 7, as a way to further explore how the Conference on Disarmament could contribute to addressing the impact of today's sweeping and rapid technological change on disarmament, as well as, more broadly, international peace and security.

In the past weeks, we have all been called to reflect about the impact of the pandemics on disarmament and international security and, more broadly, on the importance of multilateralism. It might be still early to strike a final balance, but it seems evident already how important is the contribution of the scientific community for our work. On so many issues – probably on the whole range of the disarmament bodies – we should reflect and work for finding better mechanisms to benefit from the value of science and rely more on scientific evidences.

This is particularly important when we refer to biological and chemical weapons. In this regard, we have supported the inclusion of a structured science and technology review process in the intersessional programme of work of the BWC, considering positively the proposals that envisage a strengthening of the relevant capacities in the Convention. Equally important is the work conducted by the OPCW, that always need to rapidly adapt to developments in the field of science and technology. In both these frameworks, I would like to recall the great commitment which has been demonstrated not only by my Country but also by the European Union.

Mister President,

Looking at emerging opportunities and challenges, I would like to conclude briefly touching upon three topics to which Italy attaches great importance.

First, the impact of new technologies on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Today, space-based applications offer unique resources to all of us, also in the domains of economic growth and innovation. Starting from the principles and the international rules that already exist, a comprehensive and effective regulatory environment should be elaborated and put in place. We should work together towards the establishment and promotion of globally-shared principles of responsible behaviors. All States – above all those, like Italy, who are developing more activities in this field – bear the responsibility for assuring the proper framework to technological developments in the outer space, that should never become an area of conflict.

Second, cyber security. Cyberspace and the Internet are one of the greatest human achievements of all times: they have already reshaped our lives by offering unprecedented opportunities. Italy remains committed to promoting a strategic framework for conflict prevention, cooperation and stability in cyberspace. In the current months, we have assisted to an even bigger proliferation of malicious cyber activities. Incidents are on the rise and a reason for serious concern. Such activities could have a destabilizing effect on international peace and security. International cooperation and multilateralism continue to be the tool to achieve our common goals, and we should try to build on the work of the two *fora* that are currently addressing these issues, namely the OEWG and the GGE. We believe we should devote more attention to effective implementation of existing rules, rather than engaging in lengthy negotiations that would create uncertainty on applicable legal framework.

Third, the emerging technologies in the area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems. Italy continues to support, and actively participate in, discussions on the possible development of LAWS. We believe that the CCW, where these discussions have taken place so far with positive results, remains the most appropriate forum to address the issue. The agreement on eleven guiding principles provides a very good basis and we are firmly convinced that the GGE should have the time and the possibility to build on these results, in the path towards the Review Conference of the CCW.

Mister President,

Technological innovation, including advancements in artificial intelligence, is likely to have an impact not only on our work, but in general on our lives. That prospect underscores the importance of processes and structures that ensure the compliance with international law. The CD has an important role to play in this regard, if we will be able to look at our common interests instead than further politicize our discussions. Italy stands ready to make its contribution, working with all Member States of the Conference to build a substantive discussion on the issues you have proposed today as well as on the other items of the Agenda.

Thank you Mister President.