



## **Open-Ended Working Group on Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations**

**Statement by H. E. Ambassador Vinicio Mati**  
**Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament**  
*Geneva, 23 February*

Mr. Chair,

Since it is the first time that my delegation takes the floor, I would like to congratulate you on your appointment, and to assure you of my delegation's full support for a productive discussion.

I would also like to thank the panelists for the interesting presentations they delivered yesterday.

Italy fully subscribes to the statement delivered yesterday by the Ambassador of Canada on behalf of 17 Countries. We are also going to submit, with several other Countries, a working paper on "A progressive approach to a world free of nuclear weapons", which represents an attempt to revisit the building blocks paradigm.

Italy fully shares the goal of a peaceful and secure world free of nuclear weapons.

At the same time, we are convinced that the promotion of international stability, based on the principle of undiminished security for all, and the full implementation of the non-proliferation obligations, are essential in order to produce an international environment conducive to a world without nuclear weapons.

Disarmament and non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing processes.

In this perspective, Italy wants to reiterate that the objective of a safer world for all without nuclear weapons, which we all share, is enshrined in Article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The NPT remains the cornerstone of the international regime for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. For this reason, we place primary importance on its universalization, and on the full implementation of its provisions, as well as of the 2010 Action Plan.

In this regard, I would like to recall that Article IX, paragraph 3, of the NPT, relating to the definition of a nuclear weapon State, shall be referred only to the five countries that have manufactured or detonated a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device before 1 January

1967. Any claim to belong to this category, and for any title, shall not be recognized to any other States, whether or not they have signed the Treaty.

The NPT remains the only realistic legal framework to pursue the security of a world without nuclear weapons, and the source of the overarching norms on which all nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation measures are based. We do not believe that any short-cut can result in an effective, verifiable, and irreversible nuclear disarmament.

The nuclear weapon States bear fundamental responsibilities in this regard. At the same time, the inclusive processes needed to advance nuclear disarmament can be based only on confidence and trust. Both nuclear weapon States and non-nuclear weapon States have to cooperate to ensure that these conditions are guaranteed.

From our perspective, a large spectrum of practical and effective measures are needed to implement article VI of the NPT. Most of them are already embodied in relevant actions of the 2010 Action Plan.

In this framework, it will be essential that nuclear-weapon States undertake further efforts to reduce and ultimately eliminate all types of nuclear weapons, deployed and non-deployed, including through unilateral, bilateral, regional, and multilateral measures. We welcome the indications of progress in implementing the New START Treaty by the Russian Federation and the US, and strongly encourage them to continue their efforts.

Another effective practical measure is the reduction by nuclear-weapon States of the role and significance of nuclear weapons in all military and security concepts, doctrines, and policies, as well as a further reduction of the operational status of nuclear weapons systems in ways that promote international stability and security.

Mr. Chair,

We remain convinced of the fundamental importance of every effort by Governments, the UN, other international and regional organizations and civil society aimed at increasing confidence, improving transparency and developing efficient verification capabilities related to nuclear disarmament. In this vein, we recall the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification, in which Italy is fully engaged.

Also, a renewed commitment by all member States to relaunch the role of the Conference on Disarmament will be a central block in the path towards a nuclear-weapon free world. In particular, the CD should immediately return to substantive work on all the issues in its agenda, especially the nuclear-related ones.

In this regard, and focusing on legal measures, the main priority for Italy remains the immediate commencement within the CD of negotiations of a Treaty dealing with fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices without preconditions. Pending the entry into force of such a Treaty, we believe that nuclear-weapon States should abide by a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

The prompt entry into force of the CTBT would provide the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime with another core “block”. In the meantime, the

determination of nuclear-weapon States to abide by their respective moratoriums on nuclear tests continues to be essential.

Continued engagement by nuclear-weapon States to respect fully their commitments with regard to security assurances, and to extend them if they have not yet done so, will be fundamental.

Also, let me recall that the establishment of further nuclear-weapon-free zones, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among States of the region concerned, will highly contribute to our common goal. For Italy, the establishment of a weapon of mass destruction free zone in the Middle East remains a priority.

Mr. Chair,

Some effective legal measures are already in place. I will not list them, as other delegations have mentioned these legal instruments yesterday and today. However, let me reiterate that in some cases, we can act in order to further strengthen, reinforce, and universalize them.

In this perspective, other effective legal measures that deserve our attention are the strengthening of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards system, including universal adherence to and implementation of comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols; the universalization of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear terrorism; the support to the practical implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540.

Mr. Chair,

We fully share the concern over the devastating impact of nuclear weapon explosions on human beings as well as on the environment. The dramatic and devastating humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons use are of serious concern for us. This concern cannot but underpin our action on disarmament, non-proliferation as well as on nuclear security.

However, we think that as long as nuclear weapons exist, many countries will continue to rely on nuclear deterrence to help preventing nuclear attacks and coercion.

Banning nuclear weapons by itself will not guarantee their elimination; progress towards the shared goal of global zero will require States focusing on common ground and working together to prevent the use of nuclear weapons and their proliferation, as well as promoting effective nuclear disarmament through the progressive approach described in the working paper Italy is going to present with a certain number of other Countries.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.