



Permanent Mission of Italy
UN - Geneva

Conference on Disarmament

Thematic event: "The centrality of international cooperation and capacity-building in building a safe and secure cyberspace"

**Statement delivered by Mr. Tancredi Francese,
Deputy Permanent Representative of Italy
to the Conference on Disarmament**

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Mister President,

Let me start by congratulating the Democratic Republic of the Congo on assuming the Presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and assure you of the full support of the Italian delegation.

We wish to express our appreciation for your presence today with us, Minister Eberande Kolongele, and we thank you for organizing this thematic discussion at the CD. I would like to thank also the distinguished panelists for such comprehensive presentations and for inspiring our debate today.

Italy aligns itself with the statement of the European Union and wishes to add the following remarks in its national capacity.

Mister President,

Technology development and science progress are critical for the well-being of humanity and have to be seen as an instrument to promote peace and sustainable growth. ICTs and the Internet are among the greatest human achievements of all times, offering unprecedented opportunities. Working on disarmament and security, we have the great responsibility for assuring the proper framework to these developments, preventing any dangerous or negative use.

From this perspective, Italy is firmly committed to a global, open, free, stable and secure cyberspace, where international law, including fundamental freedoms and human rights, fully apply. To achieve this goal, international cooperation is crucial and we need to improve dialogue, transparency and confidence building measures to promote a better understanding of the common challenges we need to face.

Italy remains committed to the concept of cyber stability and to the multi-stakeholder approach, supporting the efforts of the international community leading towards a cyberspace based on the applicability and respect of international law in its entirety, beginning with the Charter of the United Nations, international humanitarian law, and international human rights law.

We fully support the ongoing work of the OEWG on ICTs and we welcome the recent successful conclusion of its third substantive session, with the consensual approval of an annual progress report. Institutional dialogue remains a key tool to ensure that security, rule of law, fundamental freedoms and human rights fully apply in cyberspace. Since Italy is a staunch supporter of multilateralism and working methods that guarantee inclusivity and build upon existing *acquis*, we believe that upcoming discussions on this issue need to be fully exploited. Institutional dialogue needs to be orderly, predictable and inclusive in order to be able to make constructive progress and be time- and financially efficient.

Mister President,

It is important to recognize that, together with the intensification and evolution of ICTs, also threats have increased. This is another important topic on which the OEWG should intensify its work, especially when it comes to the cyber resilience of digital infrastructure and to the threats posed by the use of cyber in armed conflict.

These issues are particularly pressing in the current challenging geopolitical environment, and after Russia's unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine. This horrible act has highlighted the reliance of critical activities in connected societies on digital infrastructure, telecommunications infrastructure in particular, and related vulnerabilities.

As expressed by the G7 Digital Ministers last May, we underscore the importance of protecting the digital infrastructure of free societies against malicious interference and influence of authoritarian regimes. We acknowledge that we must prioritize supporting the resilience of information, communications, and telecommunications infrastructure, which reinforces the importance of access to the global Internet that undergirds business and access to information, including life-saving information. We are committed to increasing the cyber resilience of digital infrastructure, including by engaging with businesses and organizations across the economy, improving and sharing awareness of cyber threats, and expanding our coordinated cyber response in line with our existing cyber- and national security frameworks and existing cooperation initiatives. We are also committed to strengthening the multistakeholder model of Internet governance in line with democratic values.

Mister President,

The cyber domain has proved to be a very dynamic context and we believe that further action is needed, in order to translate our discussion into something tangible that improves the international cooperation on cyber security. In this vein, Italy supports the proposal of establishing a Programme of Action on advancing responsible behaviour in cyberspace, as a necessary complementary initiative for an action-oriented agenda.

This should and will be an inclusive process, driven by the Member States of the United Nations. We believe that at this delicate juncture we need to come together and give an operational dimension to our institutional dialogue. We therefore fully support the Cyber PoA and salute it as a very sensible, inclusive and balanced project, which can provide us with an operational dialogue focused on implementation, building on our acquis.

Talking about “action” let me underline that capacity building is crucial for a safe and secure cyber space. We appreciate your choice to focus today’s discussion also on this topic, and we would like to use this opportunity to acknowledge the work of UNIDIR, especially within its “Security and Technology Programme”.

To conclude, and as testimony of Italy’s openness and willingness to ensure the success of this approach, let me flag our availability to work hand-in-hand with all the Member States of the UN as we acknowledge capacity building as a crucial tool to achieve our ultimate goals. Whether in the areas of international law, national legislation and policy, or more technical issues, we believe that regional organizations and dialogue between and among these could be the perfect setting to bring capacity building activities forward, on top of bilateral exchanges.

Although referred to other fields, the pandemic has emphasized the importance of a universally respected and reliable scientific community. We think the same is valid for all domains related to cybersecurity, we should be embracing such diversity which will help us to converge towards unity of intent.

Thank you Mister President.