



Statement by H. E. Ambassador Gianfranco Incarnato
Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament
Geneva, 23 January 2018

Mr. 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 2018 session of the Conference on Disarmament. Please rest assured of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

I would like to thank the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for her message, which we strongly welcome.

As the newly appointed Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament, I feel honoured and privileged to represent my Country in this body. I thank you and all the other colleagues for your warm welcome. I look forward to working closely with all of you.

In my turn, let me join the other delegations in congratulating and welcoming the new Permanent Representatives of Austria, Egypt, Ireland, Peru and Mexico.

Italy aligns itself with the statement of the European Union. Let me add some remarks in my national capacity.

Mr. President,

Italy firmly believes that multilateralism and international cooperation are crucial for effective and long-term results in disarmament and non-proliferation. We remain engaged in promoting these values and approaches in all relevant fora.

The current security situation – characterized by growing tensions, new conflicts, arms proliferation, and a fast-changing environment – adds a new sense of urgency to our efforts. To this aim, the Conference on Disarmament remains crucial.

Mr. President,

Let me be clear. We fully understand and share the sense of frustration stemming from the long stalemate in the Conference's work, which has been voiced so many times in this Chamber. This deadlock, which has now lasted more than two decades, is deplorable.

Nonetheless, 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 untapped nowadays. It is up to us to act in order to preserve and relaunch its role, allowing it to resume its substantive work.

Mr. President,

Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation stand high in the CD agenda and are among the priorities of Italy's foreign policy.

In this framework, 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. We are confident that, under the able leadership of Canada, the work of the High Level Expert Preparatory Group established by the UN General Assembly in 2016 will contribute to this goal and we look forward to its report later this year.

We would 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. Both these initiatives would also represent concrete steps towards the fulfilment of art. VI of the NPT and would bring us closer to our shared goal of a nuclear weapon-free world.

Mr. President,

The fast-changing security environment that I mentioned earlier brings us to face new and emerging issues, alongside our traditional priorities. As the Secretary General of the Conference, Mr. Moeller, reminded us, key to any discussion on peace, conflict prevention and disarmament is the question of how to channel scientific and technical advances for the common good. Therefore, we should ask ourselves whether the Conference on Disarmament could become the forum where to address also the impact of emerging technologies, as well as other contemporary issues affecting international peace and security.

We believe that the CD's Agenda is inclusive, comprehensive and flexible enough to allow us to deal with potentially all relevant security issues. We remain open to further explore this path. In this regard, we believe that a more in-depth interaction of the CD with civil society in its broadest sense - encompassing also the academia, the private sector and the industry - could make a key contribution to our work. We welcome the announcement of the organization of the third CD-Civil Society Forum, later this year.

Mr. President,

Also in light of the increasing tendency to bring disarmament negotiations outside the CD, today more than ever we are confronted with the concrete risk of the marginalization of the Conference, and ultimately of its irrelevance.

The time to react is elapsing. Let's take up the challenge together. Not only we have work to do and all the needed tools to attain our goals. We also have a proper set of incentives.

On the one hand, we are aware of the extremely positive results we can achieve when diplomacy works. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action between the E3/EU+3 and Iran, which we highly value, is an excellent example in this regard. We believe that the international community should continue to take every action to ensure that it remains a success story, as an essential tenet for regional and international security.

On the other hand, the deteriorating security environment calls for renewed determination to advance our shared disarmament goals. In this respect, the DPRK's nuclear and ballistic programs continue to be a growing source of concern to us. We strongly condemn them as clear violations of relevant UN Security Council resolutions and a serious threat to peace and regional and international security. We reiterate our call on the DPRK to abandon the development of all its existing nuclear and ballistic missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner and to return at an early date to the NPT and IAEA Safeguards, as well as to sign and ratify the CTBT.

Before concluding, Mr. President,

Allow me to stress once again that my Country stands ready to work with all partners to advance disarmament goals and values, in the CD and in all the other relevant fora, starting from the upcoming Second Preparatory Committee of the 2020 Review Conference of the Non Proliferation Treaty.

Thank you.