



**PERMANENT MISSION OF ITALY
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Gianfranco Incarnato,
Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament
to the First Committee of the 73rd UN General Assembly**

General Debate

New York, 12 October 2018

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Mr. Chair,

Allow me to begin by congratulating you on your appointment as Chair of the 1st Committee of the 73rd UN General Assembly, and to assure you of my Delegation's full support.

Italy aligns itself with the statement of the European Union. I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

Mr. Chair,

A rules-based international system and effective multilateralism are of utmost importance to identify solutions to global challenges and threats to international peace and security.

We reiterate our support for the UN disarmament machinery and its three mutually reinforcing fora, which remain central and irreplaceable.

We welcome the establishment of five subsidiary bodies in this year's session of the Conference on Disarmament. These allowed for in-depth and substantive discussions resulting in the adoption of four reports that we hope will provide a solid basis to build on in 2019. We do regret, however, that the Final Report of the CD does not reflect these substantive discussions. We remain convinced of the centrality of the CD and of the need to relaunch its role.

Mr. Chair,

Italy fully shares the goal of a peaceful and secure world free of nuclear weapons and is firmly committed to disarmament, arms control, and non-proliferation as essential components of its foreign policy.

In this regard, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) remains the key instrument, as the cornerstone of the international regime, with its three mutually reinforcing pillars: non-proliferation, disarmament and promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We call upon States

that have not yet done so to join the NPT as non-nuclear weapon States, without delay and without conditions.

Our efforts for effective progress on nuclear disarmament are underpinned by our utmost concern for the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons' use.

The NPT provides the only realistic legal framework to attain a world without nuclear weapons, in a way that promotes international stability and is based on the principle of undiminished security for all. Such a goal can be attained only through a progressive approach based on effective measures, in accordance with Article VI of the NPT, involving all relevant actors, in a perspective based on the research for consensus.

Among these measures, the prompt entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is 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, particularly the remaining eight Annex-2 States. In the meantime, we call upon all States to respect the moratorium on nuclear test explosions and to refrain from any action that could undermine the objective and purpose of the Treaty.

The immediate commencement of negotiations within the CD of a Treaty dealing with fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices is also of crucial importance. We welcome the successful conclusion of the work of the High Level Expert Preparatory Group established by UNGA Resolution 71/259, and the release of its report. We are confident that the Group's work will provide fruitful input for negotiations of a fissile material treaty within the CD. Pending the conclusion of such a Treaty, all relevant States should abide by a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

We would also like to recall the potential of Negative Security Assurances. We continue to support the possible elaboration within the CD of recommendations dealing with all aspects of NSAs, not excluding an internationally legally binding instrument.

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. We support the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification and welcome the beginning of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament, as per UNGA Resolution 71/67, that Italy co-sponsored.

We also reiterate our support for the convening of a Conference on the establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and all other Weapons of Mass Destruction - to be attended by all States of the region on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by them - as decided by the 2010 Review Conference.

We express satisfaction at the announcement by the Russian federation and the United States that they have met the central limits of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) in February 2018 and encourage them to extend the Treaty. We underline the importance of preserving the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) as a landmark agreement that remains key to European and international security and stability.

Mr. Chair,

After a deeply troubling 2017, when DPRK's nuclear and missile tests ruthlessly threatened international peace and security, as well as the non-proliferation regime, in the first half of 2018 high-level diplomatic efforts have brought about positive developments. We strongly hope that such steps may be conducive to an open and constructive dialogue, aimed at fulfilling our common goal of a complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. We strongly believe that international sanctions against the DPRK must remain in force and be implemented to sustain the current negotiating process. A durable collective commitment remains necessary.

In the context of international efforts aimed at strengthening the non-proliferation architecture, the JCPoA remains a key element. We firmly believe that the international community needs to remain committed to a full and effective implementation of the Plan of Action, as long as Iran continues to strictly abide by its nuclear-related commitments. We welcome the IAEA's confirmation of Iran's compliance with such commitments in 12 successive reports. We also reiterate the importance of a full and effective implementation of Resolution 2231. We are determined to cooperate with all interested stakeholders to preserve the JCPoA and we fully support the efforts undertaken by the European Union in this respect, as well as current work towards a legal entity allowing European companies to continue their legitimate trade with Iran.

Mr. Chair,

Italy remains strongly committed to supporting the Chemical Weapons Convention and the work of the OPCW and reaffirms the need for full compliance with the 1925 Geneva Protocol. We are deeply concerned that chemical weapons have been repeatedly used in recent months. We reiterate our condemnation in the strongest possible terms of the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, anytime and under any circumstances. We also stress the need to react in order not to give acquiescence to what unfortunately seems to be an alarming emerging trend, which we entirely reject.

As emphasized by the UN Secretary-General in his Agenda for Disarmament, the international community as a whole must ensure accountability and continue to take a clear stance against impunity for such heinous crimes. In this spirit, Italy joined and actively participates in the Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons, launched in January 2018.

While deeply regretting that no agreement could be reached on the renewal of the mandate of the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) on Syria, we welcome the June 2018 Decision of the Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the CWC, which i.a. enhances the capacity of the OPCW Technical Secretariat to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in Syria. We stand ready to support the Secretariat and to cooperate with all States Parties in the implementation of this Decision.

We also attach great importance to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and recognize the need to strengthen the international architecture dealing with biological weapons. We remain convinced that a strong intersessional work programme is fundamental and we appreciate the substantive work carried out by the Meetings of Experts in August, which usefully allowed for technical input by relevant international, regional and non-governmental organizations.

Italy remains deeply concerned by the increasing risk of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of non-state actors, particularly in relation to terrorist acts. In this respect, we support the strengthening of the 1540 Committee mechanism to increase national capacities in the implementation of non-proliferation measures and we welcome the positive outcome of the Review of the UN Resolution 1540 regime, as embodied in UN Security Council resolution n. 2325.

Mr. Chair,

We are also fully committed to international efforts to address the humanitarian, socio-economic, and security impacts of conventional weapons.

Italy welcomes the consensual outcome of the 2018 Review Conference of the Program of Action on small arms and light weapons and looks forward to the implementation of its Outcome Document. We continue to believe that applying the UNPoA provisions also to SALW ammunition would be beneficial. We also continue to stress the fundamental link between sustainable development, peace and security, as recognized by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We call for the universalization of the Arms Trade Treaty and for the full implementation of all its provisions in order to progress towards a more transparent and responsible arms trade and to countering illicit arms transfers.

Further, we strongly and actively support the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its Annexed Protocols, the Anti-Personnel Landmines Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munition. We attach great importance to their universalization, to full compliance with their provisions, and to the development of any possible synergy among them.

Italy is satisfied at the in-depth work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems and its substantive outcome. We share the principles identified by the Group that International Humanitarian Law must apply to all weapons systems, including LAWS, and that any existing or future weapon system must be subject to human control, particularly in relation to the ultimate decision to use lethal force. We support the renewal of the GGE mandate for 2019, which will provide the opportunity to further discuss the issue, with the view to paving the way towards a consensual political declaration.

Italy is extremely concerned by the indiscriminate humanitarian and socio-economic impacts of anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions, especially on civilians. As we firmly believe in the importance of international cooperation and assistance, we continue to devote material, technical and financial resources to the implementation of comprehensive mine action programs. We promote an integrated and inclusive approach to mine action, and have been particularly engaged in promoting gender- and diversity-responsive assistance.

Mr. Chair,

We are firmly committed to the long-term sustainability, safety and security of the space environment and we believe that a comprehensive and effective international regulatory environment should be elaborated and put in place.

Italy welcomes the Conference UNISPACE+50 and we are ready to contribute to the development of the “Space2030” agenda and its implementation plan over the next two years. We also commend the establishment of a dedicated working group on the matter under the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS).

Italy appreciates the important work carried out from 2010 to 2018 by the COPUOS Working Group on Long Term Sustainability (LTS) of Outer Space Activities in order to adopt a compendium of guidelines. This work could represent a solid basis for a more comprehensive voluntary instrument covering substantial aspects of safety, security, and sustainability of outer space activities. Such an instrument should include key principles of responsible behaviour in outer space activities and associated Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures (TCBMs), including those identified by the 2013 GGE, endorsed by the UN General Assembly.

From this perspective, Italy remains fully committed to preventing an arms race in outer space (PAROS) and to preventing outer space from becoming an area of conflict as essential conditions to strengthen strategic stability. We therefore support the on-going discussions within the GGE on PAROS, established by UNGA Resolution 72/250, in which we actively take part.

Italy supports developing norms and principles of responsible State behaviour in cyberspace, in conformity with existing international law, as well as the promotion of confidence-building measures, international cooperation and capacity-building to improve cyber security, promote free and open cyberspace and decrease the risk of disputes among States in this field. We reaffirm our commitment to improving stability in cyberspace and call on the UN Secretary General to convene a new Group of Governmental Experts in 2019, building upon the work of the previous UNGGE, to provide a consensus report to the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session.

Thank you.