



Statement by H. E. Ambassador Gianfranco Incarnato
Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament
Geneva, 22 May 2018

Subsidiary Body 4 (NSAs)

Mr. Coordinator,

At the outset, let me congratulate you on your appointment and thank you for the very useful background documents you circulated to structure our discussions.

Let me also thank Ms Dwan from UNIDIR for her overview of the debate on NSAs so far.

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

Mr. Coordinator,

Italy believes that negative security assurances have an important role to play in advancing both global and regional security, specifically through their contribution towards the goals of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation as set out in the NPT.

For nuclear weapon states, NSAs lead to a de facto reduction of possible targets, with a progressively more marginal role of nuclear arsenals in national and collective defence postures.

For non-nuclear weapon states, the assurance that nuclear weapon ones will not use or threaten the use of nuclear weapons against them provides further confidence in the non-proliferation regime. As such, it constitutes an incentive not to pursue the development or acquisition of nuclear weapons.

Italy recognizes the legitimate interest of Non-Nuclear Weapon States in receiving unequivocal, legally-binding assurances from all Nuclear Weapons States. The full implementation of existing NSAs, therefore, is key.

In this regard, however, I would like to underline two fundamental aspects.

First, we believe that negative assurances may be fully applied only to States that respect their non-proliferation obligations. In this respect, the membership in and full compliance with the NPT remains fundamental.

Second, while contributing to nuclear disarmament, NSAs should be considered as an interim step towards it. Our shared goal remains a world free of nuclear weapons and this should continue to be pursued in the framework of a progressive approach, focusing on effective measures, in accordance with Article VI of the NPT.

In this sense, NSAs should not be seen in isolation, but as an essential complement to other initiatives such as the commencement of negotiations of a Treaty dealing with fissile material for

nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, entry into force of the CTBT, and the establishment of nuclear weapon free zones.

On this last point, we encourage all Nuclear Weapon States to sign and ratify the relevant Protocols providing security assurances to States members of nuclear weapon free zones.

We also reiterate our commitment towards the establishment of a Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and all other Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East.

In this view, we continue to strongly support the convening of a Conference on the establishment of such a zone – to be attended by all States of the region on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by them – in accordance with the decisions of the 1995 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences.

Mr Coordinator,

In Italy's view, there is room for going beyond the full implementation of existing NSAs and for exploring ways to strengthen them. The CD has a significant role to play and could give a decisive contribution to this debate, especially within the context of an agreed, comprehensive and balanced programme of work. Italy supports its continued engagement on this issue, with a view to elaborating recommendations dealing with all its aspects, not excluding an internationally legally binding instrument.

Thank you.