



Permanent Mission of Italy  
UN - New York

**First Committee of the 75<sup>th</sup> UN General Assembly  
General Debate**

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Stefano Stefanile,  
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Mister Chair,

I would like to start by wishing you and the members of the Bureau a successful holding of this annual session of the First Committee. Rest assured of the full support of the Italian delegation.

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

Mister Chair,

The international scenario currently under our eyes is deeply concerning, with heightened international and regional tensions: it is of utmost urgency that we act with determination to safeguard and to strengthen the international architecture on disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, preventing a new arms race in any domain. 75 years after the foundation of the United Nations, it is clear to us that effective multilateralism and a rules-based international system are the only tools to preserve the results achieved so far and further advance relevant processes.

Today, after having experienced COVID-19, we must not and cannot turn a blind eye on our collective responsibilities to enhance global security. In many areas of the world, the pandemic has even exacerbated conflicts, with potentially dramatic consequences, especially for the civilian populations. We therefore immediately supported the Appeal launched last March by Secretary General Guterres for a "Global Cease-fire" in all corners of the world. It is time to put armed conflicts on lockdown, while focusing all together on the fight against the corona-virus.

Italy firmly believes that any issue relating to peace and security must be addressed through prevention, mediation, diplomacy. In this exceptional time, we need a collective renewed commitment towards preserving international institutions and instruments, and guaranteeing their proper functioning. For this reason, Italy reiterates its support for the UN disarmament machinery and its three mutually reinforcing fora, which remain central and irreplaceable.

Mister Chair,

Italy reaffirms its firm commitment to disarmament and international security, in particular sharing the goal of a peaceful and secure world free of nuclear weapons. Our efforts for effective progress on nuclear disarmament are underpinned by our utmost concern for the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons' use.

50 years after its entry into force, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), with its three mutually reinforcing pillars, remains the cornerstone of the international regime. It 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. Italy supports the efforts to use the remaining time in preparation of the Review Conference as an opportunity to build bridges between the States Parties and assess the substantial progress achieved so far in the framework of this historic Treaty. We stand ready to identify ways to support, uphold and preserve it in the difficult current environment. We call upon States that have not yet done so to join the NPT as non-nuclear weapon States, without delay and without conditions, and we call on all State Parties to the Treaty to implement all its provisions as well as commitments agreed by subsequent Review Conferences.

Nuclear weapon States bear fundamental responsibilities and we encourage them to seek further reductions in their nuclear arsenals, while enhancing transparency on their policies and doctrines. We are convinced that the goal of a nuclear weapon free world and an effective, verifiable, and irreversible nuclear disarmament can be attained only through an inclusive and progressive approach, in accordance with Article VI of the NPT, based on concrete and effective measures. We welcome the strategic stability dialogue between the United States and the Russian Federation and we encourage them to seek further reductions to their arsenals, to extend the New START Treaty and to engage on other arms control arrangements, including with a view to their widening in terms of scope and participants.

A main priority for Italy remains the prompt entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. It is a crucial component of the global architecture of nuclear non-proliferation. As a staunch supporter of the Treaty, Italy urges all States that have not yet done so, in particular the remaining eight Annex-2 States, to sign and ratify the Treaty without further delay. 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 Conference on Disarmament of a Treaty dealing with fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices is also of crucial importance to achieve the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. Pending the conclusion of such a Treaty, all relevant States should abide by a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

Moreover, the Conference on Disarmament could also be the framework for the elaboration of recommendations dealing with all aspects of Negative Security Assurances, without excluding the possibility of an international 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 and welcome the work conducted within the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament.

Furthermore, we would like to reiterate our support for the establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and all other Weapons of Mass Destruction, based on arrangements freely agreed among all the States of the Region.

Mister Chair,

In the context of the international efforts aimed at strengthening the non-proliferation architecture, Italy believes that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action remains a key element. The full implementation of the deal and of all provisions of UN Security Council Resolution 2231 is crucial for regional and international security. We are gravely concerned by Iranian disengagement from the JCPoA and we urge Iran to return to full compliance without delay and to provide the IAEA with a full and timely cooperation with respect to all its safeguard-related commitments in order to clarify and resolve any pending issue. We welcome the Joint Statement of Iran and the IAEA dated 26 August and related developments on sites inspections. We are ready to support initiatives aimed at de-escalating the present tensions and restoring the JCPoA's integrity.

The repeated ballistic missile launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in violation of multiple UN Security Council Resolutions, deeply concern us. DPRK's intention to retain and further develop its nuclear and ballistic programmes represent a threat that we cannot ignore. We urge the DPRK to take concrete steps towards a complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization, in which the IAEA needs to play a key role. We therefore call on Pyongyang to engage in credible negotiations in this respect and to give tangible proof of its asserted willingness to denuclearize by returning to the NPT, signing and ratifying the CTBT and resuming its collaboration with the IAEA. In the meantime, the international sanctions regime needs to remain in place and be effectively implemented, sustaining the negotiating process towards this goal.

Mister Chair,

Italy remains strongly committed to supporting the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the work of the OPCW. We strongly condemn any use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anyone – be it a State or a non-State actor – under any circumstances. It is imperative to identify and hold accountable the perpetrators of chemical attacks. Italy firmly condemns the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Air Force as concluded by the first report of the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team (IIT). We welcome the OPCW Executive Council Decision taken in July 2020 on addressing the possession and use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic and urge the Syrian Arab Republic to take all the measures required by such decision.

We also condemn, in the strongest possible terms, the poisoning of Alexei Navalny with a chemical nerve-agent. Italy welcomes the delivery of the OPCW's analysis and calls on Russia to investigate and to disclose in a transparent manner the circumstances of this chemical weapons attack, to fully cooperate with the OPCW Technical Secretariat in order to resolve this issue, and ultimately to comply with its obligations as a Chemical Weapons Convention State Party.

The current pandemic has shown how important is for us to work together to improve biosecurity and biosafety. We attach great importance to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC), as a fundamental component of the international architecture of the disarmament regime, and to the UN Secretary-General's Mechanism. Operating in a context characterized by fast-paced scientific and technological developments, we should strengthen the BWC and endow it with appropriate mechanisms to assess the potential impact of such developments.

Italy is 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 strongly support full and universal implementation of UNSC Resolution 1540 and its follow on Resolutions, as well as of all other relevant international instruments. In particular, we underline the importance of the International Convention on the Suppression of Acts on Nuclear Terrorism and we encourage all States to become Party to this Agreement and to comply fully with its provisions.

Mister Chair,

Italy is extremely concerned by the indiscriminate humanitarian and socio-economic impacts of anti-personnel landmines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war, as well as improvised explosive devices, especially on civilians and in urban zones. Therefore, we believe international cooperation and victim assistance are keys components of a comprehensive approach to mine action. We should also contemplate gender- and diversity-responsive assistance.

We welcome the results achieved last year in Oslo, on the occasion of the approval of a new Action Plan by the Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, in line with our commitment for a world free of mines. With the same engagement, we are looking forward to participate, next November, to the Second Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions in Lausanne, as another important milestone on the way to a more secure and peaceful world.

We are equally concerned by the extremely serious humanitarian impact of explosive weapons in populated areas (EWIPA). In this respect, we support the process led by Ireland, potentially leading to a political declaration aimed at strengthening the collective commitment on this issue.

Furthermore, looking at the protection of civilians and having in mind the data on armed violence, we believe in the importance of countering illicit arm transfers. For this reason, we call for the universalization of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and for the full implementation of all its provisions in order to progress towards a more transparent and responsible framework on this important issue.

Italy also strongly and actively supports the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its Annexed Protocols. We attach great importance to their universalization, to full compliance with their provisions, and to the development of any possible synergy among them.

We especially welcome the substantive outcomes of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems, which led last year to the endorsement of the eleven guiding principles. Bearing in mind the importance of applying International Humanitarian Law to all weapons systems, we believe that further discussing this issue is crucial in order to reach consensus on the possible elements of a normative and operational framework.

Mister Chair,

Italy strongly believes that 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. 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, we are firmly committed to the long-term sustainability, safety and security of the outer space environment and we believe that a comprehensive and effective international regulatory environment should be elaborated and put in place. In 2019, a National security strategy for space has been approved under the auspices of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, as a part of our National Strategy for Space. Italy remains fully committed to preventing an arms race in outer space and to preventing outer space from becoming an area of conflict as essential conditions to strengthen strategic stability.

We believe it is important to develop initiatives that will increase confidence and mutual trust between current and future space actors. In this regard, we would like to highlight the importance of transparency and confidence building measures that can contribute to the security, safety and sustainability of activities in outer space. We encourage further international cooperation to elaborate agreed principles of responsible behaviour.

Along the same line, ICT and the Internet are one of the greatest human achievements of all times: they have already reshaped our lives by offering unprecedented opportunities of societal well-being, economic growth, sustainable development and prosperity that can thrive only in a global, open, free, stable and secure cyberspace. We are therefore committed to supporting the efforts of the international community towards a cyberspace based on the respect of international law and where security, rule of law, fundamental freedoms and human rights fully apply and are all intertwined. Institutional dialogue is a key tool in this perspective and Italy supports the proposal to establish a Programme of Action on advancing responsible behaviour in cyberspace, providing a one-track path towards consensus between States on such a sensitive issue.

Mister Chair,

Across all these issues, Italy believes that greater interaction with civil society – broadly encompassing academia, NGOs, and the private sector – could make a key contribution to our work.

Moreover, Italy promotes policies and approaches that enable the full empowerment of women and take into due regard the gendered impacts of armed violence and the importance of including women in disarmament negotiations and peacebuilding programs. Italy has so far adopted three National Action Plans to implement UNSC Resolution 1325 that, for the first time, addressed not only the disproportionate impact of war on women, but also their pivotal role in conflict prevention and resolution, as well as in the achievement of sustainable peace.

Thank you, Mister Chair.