



Permanent Mission of Italy
UN - New York

First Committee of the 76th UN General Assembly
Thematic Debate. Clusters 1 - 4
Statement by Mr. Pietro De Martin,
First Counsellor, Mission of Italy to the United Nations
New York, 13 October 2021

Mister Chair,

Italy fully shares 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.

The NPT, with its three mutually reinforcing pillars, remains the cornerstone of the international regime. It must be supported, upheld and preserved, especially in today's difficult environment. We therefore invite States that have not yet done so to join the Treaty as non-nuclear weapon States, without delay and without conditions.

We are striving for true progress on nuclear disarmament, in a way that promotes international stability and is based on the principle of undiminished security for all. In this perspective, one measure we are pursuing is the prompt entry into force of the CTBT; in the meantime, we call upon all States to respect the moratorium on nuclear test explosions. Another key priority is for the CD to immediately start negotiations for a fissile materials cut-off treaty. We also wish to mention the potential of Negative Security Assurances and to reiterate our support for the establishment of Zones Free of Nuclear Weapons and all other Weapons of Mass Destruction.

Mister Chair,

The proliferation of nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery continues to pose a major threat to international security. Italy supports the strengthening of the IAEA safeguards system, including universal adherence to comprehensive agreements and additional protocols. Moreover, securing sensitive materials, especially from access by terrorist networks, and implementing effective export controls continue to be major challenges.

These challenges point to the need for the universal and effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC). Italy remains firmly committed to supporting the work of the OPCW. We also attach great importance to the UN Secretary-General's Mechanism, the only existing framework that provides for an investigation of alleged use of biological weapons, which has successfully worked in the past.

We are deeply concerned by the repeated use of chemical weapons in recent years. In the strongest possible terms, we condemn their use by anyone, anywhere, anytime and under any circumstances. We must respond to this alarming trend by ensuring accountability and continuing to take a clear stance against impunity for such heinous crimes.

Mister Chair,

Italy strongly supports all international instruments restricting or prohibiting the use of weapons contrary to International Humanitarian Law. In this context, universalization and effective implementation of the Ottawa and Oslo Conventions are among our priorities. As part of our long-standing commitment, a dedicated Trust Fund for Humanitarian Demining was set up by law in 2001 and since then Italy has devoted more than 62 million Euros to Mine Action programmes and has doubled its budget for 2021 with respect to 2020, as a sign of renewed commitment.

With the same engagement, we are looking forward to participate to the Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. We welcome the intersessional work conducted so far, which has allowed in-depth exchanges on several issues of concern, as well as the on-going work of the GGE on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems. In this regard, Italy strongly supports the view that any weapon system, existing or future, must be subject to human control, particularly in relation to the ultimate decision to use lethal force.

We share the deep concern of the international community at the growing use and impacts of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), which pose serious threats to civilians, humanitarian workers and peacekeeping personnel in conflict afflicted and post-conflict areas.

Italy is also concerned by the growing illicit flows of small arms and light weapons, including in the so-called deep web, because they represent the main casualty of victims. In this context, we wish to reaffirm the fundamental link between sustainable development, peace, and security, as recognized by the 2030 Agenda.

Mister Chair,

Today, we assist to the affirmation of a New-Space paradigm, which goes together with deep and rapid technological developments. This make the space domain an always more complex scenario, in which the commercial race is introducing a new face of competition between States. Security in space is gradually becoming more linked to economic and social stability on Earth, and increasingly critical to ensuring that future space exploration and exploitation activities are conducted in the most balanced way possible.

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.

Italy is firmly committed both at the national and at the international level, because we believe that a comprehensive and effective international regulatory environment should be elaborated and put in place.

We are also convinced that it is important to develop initiatives aimed at increasing 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 as a crucial step towards achieving greater safety, security, and sustainability in outer space activities. We therefore encourage further international cooperation to elaborate agreed principles of responsible behaviour in outer space.

Thank you, Mister Chair.