



Permanent Mission of Italy
UN - Geneva

Conference on Disarmament

Opening Statement

**delivered by Amb. Gianfranco Incarnato,
Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament**

Geneva, 25 January 2022

Mister 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 2022 session of the Conference on Disarmament. Please rest assured of my Delegation's full support and cooperation.

I would also like to express our gratitude to the Secretary General of the Conference, Ms. Valovaya, for her intervention at the Opening Session and for her precious support, together with the Secretariat.

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

Mister President,

We welcome your encouragement to exchange views today about the work of the Conference in the context of the current international security landscape. While we are convened here, all around the world – including not very far from where we seat – tensions rise and geopolitical rivalry increase.

Heightened international and regional crises make the scenario currently under our eyes deeply concerning. We are facing problems that we cannot solve on our own and, in many areas of the world, the pandemic has even exacerbated conflicts.

Under these circumstances, Italy believes that a revival of the Conference on Disarmament is needed and urgent, as disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control play a crucial role in the security landscape. We fully understand and share the sense of frustration stemming from the long impasse in the Conference's work, which is regrettable. At the same time, 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 unfulfilled nowadays.

It is up to us to act in order to preserve and relaunch the role of the Conference. We should recognize that it will be difficult to make any progress by going backward to old approaches. Instead, our work needs to adapt to new circumstances, to recognise the new layers of risk. Pending agreement on negotiations to start – and with the view to create the conditions for those negotiations to start, – we should use this platform to enhance dialogue and transparency, to overcome ambiguity and misperceptions that make the global atmosphere increasingly polarized and more confrontational than collaborative.

In doing so, Italy reiterates its firm commitment for international cooperation and multilateralism and we remain engaged in promoting these values in our work at the CD.

While we recognize the difficulties, we are ready to support your efforts to reach consensus on a Program of Work. We are very much in favour of a more pragmatic approach, without protracted procedural debates and with substantive work in so many important areas of discussion instead.

Mister President,

I do not intend today to elaborate much on the agenda of the Conference, since I hope we will have the opportunity to do so during this year's Session. But let me touch upon a few priorities which are particular important for my Country.

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. In this regard, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), with its three mutually reinforcing pillars, remains the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime. We regret that the Review Conference had to be postponed again and we look forward to actively participating in it, as soon as the health situation allows.

At the same time, we believe we should work to reinvigorate the role of the CD for nuclear disarmament as a forum to enhance and expand dialogue on strategic issues. Given the difficult geopolitical and security environment, it is clear that this is a long-term project to be attained through an inclusive and progressive approach.

But difficulties are not impossible to overcome, especially if we are able to show political will and leadership. In this vein, Italy welcomes the Joint statement of the five nuclear-weapon states of January 3rd, 2022, on preventing nuclear war and avoiding arms races. In particular, we appreciate the affirmation that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought and we welcome the intention of the P5 to continue working in order to prevent a new nuclear arms race, as well as to avoid military confrontations, strengthen stability and predictability, and increase mutual understanding and confidence. We encourage the P5 to further pursue constructive dialogue.

An important step in this direction should be the prompt entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We urge all States that have not yet done so, particularly the remaining eight Annex-2 States, to sign and ratify the Treaty without further delay.

We also continue to support the immediate commencement of negotiations on a Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Pending its conclusion, all relevant States should abide by a moratorium. Last December, the General Assembly approved by vast majority an important Resolution on this issue, urging the work of the CD. We cannot ignore this appeal anymore and, while we recognize the work done by the P5 on this subject, we believe that a collective effort is needed to make further progress.

Mister President,

Since we are talking about the current international security landscape, I would like to briefly touch upon two issues which we deem particularly urgent.

The first is about the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. The full implementation of the deal and of all provisions of UN Security Council Resolution 2231 is crucial for regional and international security. We remain concerned by Iranian disengagement from the JCPoA and we urge Iran to revert to full implementation of its obligations under the JCPoA without delay and to recede from its activities related to uranium enrichment, stockpiling of nuclear material, together with the further development, at a faster pace, of technical capabilities. We call on all participants in the Vienna talks to spare no efforts in addressing and resolving the current issues through dialogue as soon as possible. At the same time, we urge Iran 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.

Second, Italy condemns the multiple ballistic missile launches by the DPRK, the latest a few days ago. Such illegal activities undermine regional and international peace and security and are a matter of grave concern. We urge the DPRK to refrain from further provocations and to take concrete steps towards a complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization. We call on Pyongyang to engage in credible negotiations in this respect and to comply with relevant UNSC Resolutions. Italy continues to support the full implementation of the international sanctions regime.

Mister President,

To conclude, Italy believes that greater interaction of the CD with society could make a key contribution to our work, helping to deepen our technical discussions and substantively enriching our debate.

Moreover, Italy promotes policies and approaches that enable the full empowerment of women, taking into due regard the gendered impacts of armed violence and the importance of ensuring adequate representation of women in disarmament negotiations and peacebuilding programs. We regret that, despite broad support, the Conference was not able to reach consensus on a technical update to its Rules of Procedure to reflect the equality of women and men during its 2021 session and we hope that 2022 session will allow for progress on this issue.

Today more than ever we face the concrete risk of the marginalization of the Conference, and ultimately of its irrelevance. We need to remember to ourselves the special responsibility that we bear in this august body and the urgency to act with determination. We need a collective renewed commitment to strengthen the CD and guarantee its proper functioning, avoiding to enter the path of a new arms race in any domain.

Thank you, Mister President.