



ITALY

Statement by H.E. Ambassador Vinicio Mati
Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament
to the First Committee of the 71st UN General Assembly
Thematic Discussion on Nuclear Weapons

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Mr. Chair,

Italy fully shares the goal of a peaceful and secure world free of nuclear weapons. This goal is enshrined in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and its full implementation is a firm priority for us.

The NPT is the cornerstone of the international regime for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as its essential legal foundation. We emphasize the importance of its universalization and call upon States that have not yet done so to join the NPT as Non-Nuclear Weapon States without delay and without conditions. We also call on all States Parties to the Treaty to comply with all its provisions, and respect commitments agreed by subsequent Review Conferences.

The NPT remains the only realistic legal framework to attain a world without nuclear weapons, and the overarching norm on which all nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation measures are based. Italy is fully committed to a successful outcome of the next NPT Review Cycle, starting with the First Preparatory Committee Meeting in 2017.

Our utmost concern for the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons' use underpins our efforts for effective progress on nuclear disarmament. Italy is committed to creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons, in a way that promotes international stability and is based on the principle of undiminished security for all.

Relevant actions should focus on practical and effective measures, as steps of a progressive approach to nuclear disarmament, in accordance with Article VI of the NPT. We also firmly believe that eliminating nuclear weapons is possible only through substantive and constructive engagement with Nuclear Weapon States.

Mr. Chair,

In the year of the 20th anniversary of the opening of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) for signature, the entry into force of this Treaty remains a top priority and a major building block of the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. In this regard, we hope that the recently adopted UN Security Council resolution n. 2310, which Italy co-sponsored, can encourage further ratifications.

In particular, we urge all States whose ratification is essential for the entry into force of the CTBT to sign and ratify it without delay and conditions. Pending the CTBT entry into force, Italy calls upon all States, including the DPRK, to respect the moratorium on nuclear test explosions, and to refrain from any action that would undermine the objective and purpose of the Treaty.

Italy strongly condemns the DPRK's nuclear tests and launches using ballistic missile technology, as they are a clear violation of all relevant UN Security Council resolutions and a serious threat to international peace and security.

We reiterate our call on the DPRK to abandon all its existing nuclear and ballistic missile programmes in a complete, verifiable, and irreversible manner. We urge the DPRK to return at an early date to the NPT, to put all of its nuclear installations under the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) full-scope Safeguards, and to sign and ratify the CTBT.

Mr. Chair,

Italy attaches fundamental importance to the immediate commencement of negotiations without preconditions of a Treaty dealing with fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Pending the entry into force of such a Treaty, we call upon all concerned States to declare and maintain a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

Italy also supports the International Partnership toward Nuclear Disarmament Verification. We consider it an important practical step toward disarmament, encompassing an effective partnership among Nuclear and Non-Nuclear Weapon States.

We welcome nuclear arsenal reductions carried out by most Nuclear Weapon States. We value the progress achieved to date by the Russian Federation and the US in implementing the New START Treaty. We strongly encourage both countries to continue their dialogue and mutual efforts to promote strategic stability, enhance confidence and transparency, and further reduce their respective nuclear weapons arsenals.

Mr. Chair,

The establishment of further nuclear-weapon-free zones will greatly contribute to our common goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Italy firmly believes that the establishment of a weapon-of-mass-destruction free zone in the Middle East, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among States in the region, remains a priority. In this regard, we continue to strongly support the process leading to the full implementation of the 1995 NPT Review Conference Resolution on the Middle East.

Last year we welcomed the historic agreement between the E3/EU+3 and Iran on a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which provided for a comprehensive and peaceful solution to the Iranian nuclear issue. We look forward to its continued, full and effective implementation, which will, in our view, contribute to enhancing regional security.

Mr. Chair,

We share the increasing concerns about the possible use of nuclear and, in particular, radiological weapons by non-state actors and terrorist groups.

In this respect, while we reiterate our support for the universal and full implementation of all relevant international instruments, we are glad to inform that Italy is going to deposit the instrument of ratification of the Convention on the Suppression of Acts on Nuclear Terrorism in a few days.

In this field we actively support other important initiatives. In November, for example, we will be hosting in Rome the next meeting of the Nuclear Forensic Working Group of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and a table top exercise in the framework of the Proliferation Security Initiative.

Finally, we deeply value the entry into force of the 2005 Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials, which Italy ratified last May, as it enhances the scope of the Convention and expands cooperation among States in preventing proliferation risks. We encourage the remaining one-third of States Parties to the Convention to promptly ratify the Amendment.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.