



Permanent Mission of Italy  
UN - Geneva

## Conference on Disarmament

**Statement delivered by Ambassador Leonardo Bencini,  
Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament**

*Geneva, 23 March 2023*

Madam President,

Since this is the first time that I am taking the floor under your Presidency allow me to congratulate you and assure you of the full support of the Italian Delegation.

I would like to thank you for this thematic debate on such a topical issue for the work of the Conference. Let me also thank the panelists for providing us with some very interesting “food for thought”.

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

Madam President,

Italy supports nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts and strongly believes in the goal of achieving a peaceful and secure world free of weapons of mass destruction. Our efforts for effective progress are underpinned by our utmost concern for the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons' use.

We remain convinced that the best approach towards the elimination of nuclear weapons is enshrined in the framework of article VI of the NPT, through a progressive approach, based on concrete measures, resulting in an effective, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament.

In this context, Italy firmly condemns any attempt at intimidation

through the use of nuclear rhetoric, as we have witnessed by the Russian Federation in the framework of its brutal war of aggression against Ukraine.

Let me add that risk reduction is based on predictability, transparency and trust among relevant actors. Any behavior that increases unpredictability while decreasing trust and transparency automatically increases risk.

We recall that, according to the NPT, nuclear-weapon States have fundamental responsibilities and we encourage those States to exercise restraint and work towards the reduction of nuclear risks and the implementation of disarmament efforts.

In the face of the current geopolitical challenges and increasing proliferation threats, the adoption of measures targeted towards the reduction of nuclear risks becomes even more important. Italy stresses the need to maintain effective channels of communication among nuclear-weapon states and to adopt a series of instruments addressing and reducing the range of risks that could lead to the use of nuclear weapons.

Increasing predictability through enhanced transparency and clearer nuclear doctrines; strengthening nuclear restraint through a lower operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems (*de-alerting*); resuming risk-reduction dialogues and information-sharing initiatives: these are only a few of the measures that nuclear-weapons states can pursue to reduce the risk of miscalculations, misunderstandings, and misperceptions that could lead to a nuclear conflict.

One issue mentioned by the panelists that in our view merits further discussion is the role of AI and its responsible application in the nuclear domain. It would be interesting to hear more from the panelists on how AI can contribute to improve strategic risk reduction.

Madam President,

Italy agrees with those members of the international community who believe that risk-reduction measures are not a substitute for nuclear disarmament. We believe, however, that the deteriorating

international environment calls for immediate actions that can avert the use of nuclear weapons and be conducive to a more stable and secure environment where disarmament efforts can take place.

Disarmament and risk reduction efforts must be pursued in parallel, with each reinforcing the other. A progressive approach that includes both disarmament and risk reduction measures can build confidence among nations and help create the conditions necessary for the achievement of a world free of nuclear weapons. Italy remains committed and will continue to work tirelessly to facilitate the achievement of these important goals.