



Permanent Mission of Italy
UN - Geneva

Conference on Disarmament

Statement delivered by Amb. Leonardo Bencini, Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament

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Madam President,

Thank you for your choice of theme for today's debate. This gives us the opportunity to praise the commitment, courage and inspirational role of women across the world as well as to address current gaps in gender equality. We appreciate your suggestion to reflect on disarmament and gender in the context of women, peace and security.

I also wish to thank the Secretary General of the Conference, Ms. Valovaya, for her participation in today's debate, and the panelists for the food for thought that they have provided us.

Italy aligns itself with the statements delivered by Colombia on behalf of a group of countries and by Sweden on behalf the European Union. Please allow me to add a few remarks in my national capacity.

Madam President,

Reporting and statistics overwhelmingly point to the gender-based dimension of armed conflicts. Women are not only victims of sexual and gender-based violence but also of psychological traumas and economic burdens. This increases their impoverishment, exploitation and social discrimination. It represents a major obstacle to the effective enjoyment of the entire spectrum of their human rights and to their meaningful empowerment.

On the other hand, there is plenty of evidence that when women are meaningfully involved, peace talks are more likely to address root causes and yield more sustainable results; peace agreements are more likely to be reached and more likely to last.

As the UN Secretary General Guterres pointed out, "the meaningful inclusion of women in decision making increases effectiveness and productivity, brings new perspectives and solutions to the table, unlocks greater resources and strengthens efforts across our work". The effective and meaningful involvement of more women is therefore crucial for peace and security and could contribute to revitalize our discussions at the Conference on Disarmament, aiming at guaranteeing a safer, more secure and sustainable world to future generations.

Madam President,

Italy boasts a long-standing tradition of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. I listened with interest to Nomsa Ndomgwe said about the legal character of the provisions of Resolution 1325 and of the obligations contained therein. Italy certainly feels bound by the Resolution. We have enthusiastically supported it since its adoption and we devote significant efforts and resources to promoting women's participation in peace and international mediation processes.

We believe that the International Community should enhance its efforts and implement the Women, Peace and Security Agenda fully, in all its aspects, as twenty-three years after the adoption of Resolution 1325, women remain underrepresented or unrepresented in peace process efforts, in spite of their constructive contribution to conflict resolution at grassroots level.

Since 2010, various General Assembly resolutions - which Italy proudly co-sponsors - on "Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control" have encouraged us to better understand the gender-based dimension of armed violence and have recognised the need to foster women's participation in disarmament, promoting equal opportunities in the decision-making processes.

It is encouraging to have witnessed over the last few years a number of UNGA Resolutions that have included language on women and gender mainstreaming in many areas relevant to the work of the Conference on Disarmament. Unfortunately, as UNIDIR report "Still Behind the Curve" highlights, we are far behind the goals set in the UNSG Agenda for Disarmament and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Madam President,

Italy is committed to doubling efforts in policy, education, capacity-building and training opportunities to enhance the role of women.

The implementation of the WPS Agenda remains one of Italy's priorities. To this end, we are currently implementing our fourth National Action Plan (NAP) on Women Peace and Security and the Italian Parliament allocated 3 million Euro in support of the implementation of the Plan, for the term 2020-2023.

Let me conclude by saying that, looking at our closest and most recent experience, Italy is extremely proud of the results achieved in gender balance at the IX Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention, that I had the honor to preside over last year. We are particularly pleased with the contribution of the Bureau to the final outcome document; a Bureau where women had a prominent role, chairing both the Committee of the Whole and the Drafting Committee, and acting as facilitators on different topics; a Bureau that was the most gender-balanced in the history of the BWC and I believe that this contributed greatly to the RevCon's positive outcome.

I think that Member States should commit to ensuring gender-balanced bureaus in RevCons and similar meetings, supporting candidatures of women. This is a small change that can be easily made and it should therefore be made.

I thank you, Madame President.