



Permanent Mission of Italy
UN - Geneva

Conference on Disarmament

**Thematic discussion on the prevention of a nuclear war
delivered by Amb. Leonardo Bencini,
Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament**

Geneva, 15 June 2023

Madame President,

At the outset, let me congratulate you on organising a thematic discussion on the prevention of a nuclear war and allow me also to thank the panellists for their well-informed and interesting presentations on Tuesday. Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union. I would like to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

The ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons is, in our view, only possible through a step-by-step approach. We are firmly convinced that negotiating a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) represents a concrete step towards nuclear disarmament and would make a significant contribution to non-proliferation and disarmament objectives. Such a Treaty is more than ever needed to encourage progress for the broader arms control and non-proliferation agenda.

Important progress was achieved in the 2014/2015 Group of Governmental Experts, of which Italy was a member, in the 2017/2018 High-level Expert Preparatory Group and in the 2018 Subsidiary Body of the Conference on Disarmament. Last year, despite the considerable efforts by many States and by our Spanish colleague, Amb. Sanchez de Lerin, whom I thank, we regret not having reached consensus in Subsidiary Body II. Nevertheless, the in-depth discussions that took place confirmed that such a Treaty would be beneficial to enhance the security environment. Despite the different perspectives on the definition, scope and measures of such a Treaty, we call on all States to show flexibility and start negotiations without further delay.

All CD members agree that the basis for such a Treaty is CD Document 1299 and the mandate contained there-in for a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable Treaty. It seems to us that there could be an emerging consensus on the general structure of the Treaty and on some of the key elements it should encompass, most notably in relation to a definition of fissile material and the inclusion of provisions on verification.

In Italy's view, a definition of fissile material should be broad enough to make the future Treaty credible and effective, but not so extensive as to entail unacceptably complex and expensive verification procedures.

The issue of verification is also key, since ultimately the credibility of the Treaty will rest on its verification provisions and on how these will ensure compliance with its obligations. We believe that verification should focus on declared production and facilities, thus allowing to detect and prevent the diversion of fissile materials to prohibited activities.

The verification regime should also provide credible assurances that no undeclared fissile material production occurs, and no undeclared facilities exist.

Pending the negotiation and entry into force of the FMCT, we call on all concerned States to declare a moratorium on the production of fissile material for military purposes without further delay.

My delegation stands ready to support any productive effort to encourage the search for a common ground and the early commencement of a negotiating process without preconditions on this issue within the CD. An internationally and effectively verifiable treaty dealing with fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices would contribute enormously to the much needed strengthening of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

Thank you, Madame President.