



I T A L Y

2018 NPT PREPARATORY COMMITTEE

GENERAL DEBATE

STATEMENT BY

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**PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ITALY
TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT**

(GENEVA, 23 APRIL 2018)

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Mr. Chair,

Let me first of all congratulate you on your appointment as Chair of this Second Meeting of the Preparatory Committee of the 2020 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference.

Let me also express our utmost appreciation for the inclusive and transparent manner in which you have conducted the preparatory process for this meeting.

I would like to assure you of my Delegation's full support and cooperation.

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

Mr. Chair,

Italy attaches great importance to disarmament in its broadest sense and it is fully committed to disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation as essential components of its foreign policy.

Within this general framework, Italy reiterates the centrality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a multilateral instrument of the utmost importance for maintaining and reinforcing international peace, security and stability.

We are convinced that the NPT remains the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and an important element in the further development of nuclear applications for peaceful purposes.

The three NPT pillars continue to be mutually reinforcing and Italy still believes that the 2010 Review Conference Action Plan remains a very good basis to progress in all of them.

We 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 State Parties to the Treaty to implement all its provisions as well as commitments agreed by subsequent Review Conferences, without delay and in a balanced manner.

Mr. Chair,

Italy continues to support the goal of a peaceful and secure world free of nuclear weapons. Through its Article VI, the NPT provides the only realistic legal framework to pursue this objective, in a way that promotes international stability and undiminished security for all.

Italy is convinced that the goal of "global zero" and an effective, verifiable, and irreversible nuclear disarmament can be attained only through an inclusive and progressive approach, based on concrete and effective measures.

Among those measures, the prompt entry into force of the "Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty" is crucial. Italy has always been and remains a staunch supporter of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and, as the 2018 Chair of the CTBTO Preparatory Commission, is focusing its

efforts on outreach. Italy calls upon all States that have not yet done so and, in particular, the remaining eight Annex-2 States, to sign and ratify the Treaty without further delay. In the meantime, we call upon all States to respect the moratorium on nuclear test explosions and to refrain from any action which could undermine the objective and purpose of the Treaty.

Another key priority for Italy remains the immediate commencement within the CD of negotiations of a Treaty dealing with fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. In this regard, we look forward to a constructive outcome of the work of the High Level Expert Preparatory Group established by UNGA Resolution 71/259. Pending the entry into force of such a Treaty, all relevant States should abide by a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. We also welcome the establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts pursuant UNGA Resolution n. 71/67 on the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament, which we co-sponsored.

Nuclear weapon States bear fundamental responsibilities for the implementation of Art. VI of the NPT. While welcoming the reductions made so far by most of them, we encourage them to seek further reductions in their nuclear arsenals. We express satisfaction at the announcement by the Russian Federation and the United States that they have met the central limits of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) on February 5, 2018 and encourage them to extend the Treaty and to pursue further discussions on confidence-building, transparency, verification activities, and reporting. We underline the importance of preserving the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty as a landmark agreement that remains key to European and international security and stability.

Mr. Chair,

The proliferation of nuclear weapons continues to represent a major threat to international security. The IAEA's system of safeguards is a fundamental component of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and plays an indispensable role in the implementation of the NPT. Italy supports the strengthening of the IAEA safeguards system, including universal adherence to comprehensive agreements and additional protocols.

The most serious challenge to the non-proliferation regime continues to be represented by the nuclear and ballistic missile programs of the DPRK, which we strongly condemn and which are a source of extreme concern. While highly welcoming ongoing diplomatic efforts to reach a peaceful solution, we reiterate our expectation of a complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization through meaningful negotiations. To this end it is instrumental to continue to exert maximum pressure on the DPRK, also through the thorough implementation of the sanction regime: the cohesion and determination of the international community are essential.

In the context of the international efforts aimed at enhancing mutual confidence and strengthening the overall non-proliferation architecture, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA) between the E3/EU+3 and Iran is an historic diplomatic success. Italy highly values it and welcomes the successive confirmation by IAEA of Iran's continued compliance with its provisions. We believe that the international community should continue to take every action to ensure that the JCPoA continues to provide benefits for all and remains a success story. The full implementation of the JCPoA and of all provisions of UN Security Council Resolution 2231 can foster international and regional security.

Italy highly values the importance of nuclear-weapon-free zones for peace and security, in accordance with the 1999 UN Disarmament Commission guidelines, and calls on nuclear-weapon States to sign and ratify the relevant protocols of the Treaties establishing such zones.

We reiterate our support to the convening of a Conference on the establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and all other Weapons of Mass Destruction - to be attended by all States of the region on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by them - as decided by the 2010 Review Conference.

Mr. Chair,

Before closing, allow me to mention that, even though Italy decided at the end of the 80s to phase out of nuclear energy for power production, we can count on a record of successful examples of peaceful applications of nuclear technology and on several centers of excellency for research purposes.

This has allowed us to actively cooperate on the international stage for the further development of nuclear applications for peaceful uses. Increasingly over the last few years, we have paid special attention to education and training in this field (Italy hosts in Trieste the International Center for Theoretical Physics and is among its main contributors). Moreover, we strongly support the IAEA technical cooperation program, in increasing the capacities of State parties wishing to develop peaceful nuclear technologies.

At the same time, we believe that the peaceful development of nuclear energy requires the implementation of safeguards as well as appropriate and effective levels of safety and security. We are supportive of all international initiatives, both at a global and regional level, aiming at enhancing the safety and security of nuclear materials, facilities, and installations.

Thank you.