



ITALY

**HIGH-LEVEL MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON
NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT**

**STATEMENT BY
VICE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF ITALY
HON. LAPO PISTELLI**

(NEW YORK, 26 SEPTEMBER 2013)

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Mr Chairman,

At the outset, let me express my highest appreciation for convening this High-Level meeting. Italy attaches great importance to nuclear disarmament and to the vision of a world without nuclear weapons. While aligning ourselves with the statement delivered earlier by the European Union, there are now some specific issues we would like to recall from a national point of view.

Mr Chairman,

In a timely but accidental manner, this meeting takes place roughly a month after the criminal attack with massive use of chemical agents in Damascus. This reminds us of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The threats and the risks associated to the spread of these weapons are incalculable and it is essential to redouble our efforts to prevent new states as well non-state actors gaining access to them. Since nuclear weapons are the most dangerous and inhumane among weapons of mass destruction, maintaining the status quo cannot be an option.

We want to express deep concern and frustration over the ongoing failure of the Conference on Disarmament in adopting its program of work and starting effective discussion on key issues. The deadlock of the “disarmament machinery” is no longer acceptable. It is essential to end this continued stalemate to avoid jeopardizing its credibility. The Conference still has the potential to play the central role in disarmament negotiations. A renewed impetus is therefore needed and we appreciated the efforts of the Open Ended Working Group and its Final Report that represents a really useful “menu for choice” to take forward multilateral nuclear negotiations.

The leading role of nuclear weapons States in moving forward on nuclear disarmament is unquestionable. We welcome the increased transparency shown by nuclear weapon States as well as the efforts made by the United States and the Russian Federation in implementing the New Start Treaty. These represent major steps in enhancing international confidence-building and transparency measures in the field of nuclear disarmament.

We strongly believe that the elimination of nuclear weapons is a way to pursue stronger security, as President Obama recalled in Berlin last June. It is of paramount importance to start reducing the role and the significance of nuclear weapons in military and nuclear doctrines, gradually undermining the perception of their utility. At the same time we want to stress the importance of considering nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament as mutually reinforcing concepts. The Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) continues to represent the essential foundation for the achievement of nuclear disarmament. We want to reaffirm our commitment to creating the conditions for a safer world for all without nuclear weapons, in accordance with Article VI of the NPT.

Some critics argue that the NPT is no longer able to tackle new challenges. We want to firmly stress that the NPT is a tool serving a political will. We should not snipe at the tool but redouble

our commitment to making progress based on considering the three pillars of the NPT as mutually reinforcing.

Mr Chairman,

Let me now address two more issues that we consider as relevant and unavoidable in order to effectively contribute to nuclear disarmament.

First of all, within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament, the negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material remain a priority. This treaty would be an instrument able to foster both disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. In May, as a follow-up of Resolution 67/53, Italy submitted to the UN Office for Disarmament its views on an FMCT, addressing five issues: definitions, verifications, nuclear fuel, production plants and stockpiles. Furthermore, Italy welcomes the decision on establishing a Group of Governmental Experts to provide sound recommendations on possible aspects of an FMCT, thus contributing effectively to the negotiating process. We are willing to take an active role, thus contributing the goals of the Group.

Secondly, we fully support the entry into force of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). It would strengthen the international non-proliferation regime, significantly contributing to the goal of a world without nuclear weapons. The complete ban on nuclear tests is a crucial step: the last nuclear test carried out by North Korea clearly demonstrates the urgent need for this Treaty's earliest possible entry into force. The New Executive Secretary of the CTBT established a "Group of Eminent Persons" to help Member States to facilitate the Treaty's entry into force. We are particularly pleased that MP Federica Mogherini represents Italy in this group. We are now looking forward to the Conference on the Entry into Force of the CTBT to take place tomorrow.

Mr Chairman,

Let me recall in conclusion the enduring soundness of the 2009 Report of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament co-chaired by [Gareth Evans](#) and [Yoriko Kawaguchi](#): "so long as any state has nuclear weapons, others will want them. So long as any such weapons remain, it defies credibility that they will not one day be used, by accident, miscalculation or design. And any such use would be catastrophic". Unfortunately, we already know what the catastrophe looks like. The Evans-Kawaguchi Report was issued with a view to the 2010 NPT Review Conference. This reminds us of the need to redouble our efforts to achieve tangible results at the next RevCon in 2015 in the field of disarmament and non- proliferation.

A significant step in this direction is to curb the proliferation of delivery means for WMD. We shall make all efforts to achieve this goal at the MTCR plenary which Italy will chair next month in Rome.

Thank you Mr Chairman.