



*Ministero degli Affari Esteri
e della Cooperazione Internazionale*

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

**63rd General Conference
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**Statement by H. E. Ambassador Maria Assunta Accili
Permanent Representative of Italy
to the International Organizations in Vienna**

Madam President,

Let me express my pleasure in attending the General Conference and allow me to congratulate you on your election.

Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered by Finland on behalf of the European Union. I will add some comments in my national capacity.

A few months after the passing away of Ambassador Amano, whose high professionalism, unwavering commitment and skilful leadership we all appreciated and remember, this General Conference is called to honour his legacy, by furthering concrete results along the path of “Atoms for Peace and Development” in all areas covered by the IAEA’s mandate, from nuclear non-proliferation, safety and security, to the peaceful use of nuclear applications and technologies and technical cooperation. Let me commend Acting Director General Feruta and his staff for the hard work they are performing in this respect. Italy will continue supporting the whole range of the Agency’s activities both financially, as the seventh contributor to the regular budget, and politically, also in its present capacity **as a member of the Board of Governors.**

Madam President,

By “preventing diversion of nuclear energy from peaceful uses to nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices” as Article III.1 of the NPT states, the **IAEA’s system of safeguards** – multilateral, impartial, qualified and effective as it is – is one of the core components of the NPT and a fundamental insurance for our security.

Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements together with Additional Protocols represent the current verification standard. Their universalization must be pursued without delay, as a means conducive to mutual trust and as a necessary step forward towards a purely peaceful use of nuclear energy and applications. The effectiveness of the safeguards system can be further strengthened through a consistent and universal application of State Level Approaches, whose development Italy continues to support.

In this context, we are deeply concerned by the severe difficulties the **Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)** on the Iranian nuclear programme is currently experiencing. The JCPOA is a key element of the global non-proliferation architecture and an achievement of multilateral diplomacy endorsed by UNSCR 2231. Its implementation is crucial for regional and international security. We urge Iran to return to full compliance without delay. We also urge Iran to provide the Agency with a full and timely cooperation with respect to all its safeguard-related commitments. We are ready to support initiatives aimed at de-escalating the present tensions and restoring the JCPOA's integrity.

We urge the **DPRK** to take concrete steps towards a complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization, in which the IAEA needs to play a key role. We therefore call on Pyongyang to engage in credible negotiations in this respect and to give tangible proof of its asserted willingness to denuclearize by returning to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), signing and ratifying the CTBT and resuming its collaboration with the IAEA. In the meantime, the international sanctions regime needs to remain in place and be effectively implemented, sustaining the negotiating process towards this goal.

Madam President,

For the safety of its nuclear installations, Italy is continuing to implement its **national policy for the decommissioning and safe management of spent fuel and radioactive waste**, in close cooperation with the IAEA. The Agency carried out two reviews in Italy in the framework of the Integrated Review Service for Radioactive Waste and Spent Fuel Management, Decommissioning and Remediation (ARTEMIS), reviewing both the whole national programme for decommissioning and radioactive waste management and the specific dismantling strategies and technologies identified by the competent State-owned company SOGIN for Trino and Garigliano, two of the four Italian nuclear power plants currently under decommissioning. Both ARTEMIS Peer Reviews provided us with new perspectives on our activities and with very useful recommendations. The international team also identified good practices which we are willing to share with other countries facing similar challenges.

In June this year the first IAEA International Workshop on Application of Sustainability Principles and Circular Economy to Nuclear Decommissioning was successfully hosted by SOGIN in Rome.

More recently, the Agency has approved SOGIN's request to become an IAEA Collaborating Centre and the relevant agreement will be finalized shortly.

For over a year the new National Inspectorate for Nuclear Safety and Radiation Protection (ISIN) has now been fully operational as the new national competent regulatory authority, strengthened in its power, independence, financial and human resources. A crucial step in the process to implement the 2016 IRRS (Integrated Regulatory Review Service) mission recommendations was thus accomplished.

Italy is indeed a party to all main international conventions in the field of nuclear safety and constantly supports the IAEA in its continuous efforts to develop standards on all aspects of nuclear safety. We are fully committed also to the implementation of the Code of Conduct on the safety and security of radioactive sources and its supplementary guidance. Moreover, as a Party to the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and of the Convention on Assistance in the case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency, we participate in the initiatives that the IAEA promotes and coordinates in cooperation with the National Competent Authorities, in particular those initiatives aimed at identifying and implementing specific arrangements for the harmonization of the emergency responses and protective actions of countries affected by a transboundary nuclear accident.

As a part of these efforts to continuously enhance nuclear safety, in June 2019 Italy, represented by ISIN, chaired the 5th European Nuclear Safety Conference organized by the European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group (ENSREG). We now look forward to the 8th Review Meeting of the Convention of Nuclear Safety in 2020, which will offer an opportunity to all parties to actively contribute to the effectiveness of the entire review process and to the continuous improvement of the safety of nuclear installations. We also look forward to the 4th Extraordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties of the Joint Convention in May 2020, with a view to exploring means to improve efficiency and effectiveness of peer review processes.

We call on all countries that have or intend to develop a nuclear power program to adhere to the relevant international instruments in the field of nuclear safety.

Madam President,

We remain fully committed to the achievement of a better international nuclear security environment. Ensuring the highest levels of nuclear security is a shared interest of the international community and represents a further contribution to the

development of nuclear technologies and applications for peaceful purposes. We strongly support the central role of the IAEA in the global nuclear security framework and we encourage all States to fulfil their nuclear security responsibilities.

Italy has ratified the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM) and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT). We actively participate in the activities of the Nuclear Security Contact Group (NSCG), in the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT) and in other relevant international and European initiatives.

As a further demonstration of our commitment to promote a nuclear security culture and capacity building worldwide, Italy continues to fund the **International School on Nuclear Security**, jointly run by the IAEA and the International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) in Trieste. The contribution of the Italian Government amounts to EUR 430,000 over the last five years. The School is highly valued by developing and emerging countries, for its contribution to the development of a cadre of professionals in the national framework governing nuclear safety and security and represents a model for capacity-building in nuclear security worldwide.

Against this backdrop, we look forward to the next International Conference on Nuclear Security (ICONS), which will take place in February 2020, as an important opportunity to build on experiences and achievements and devise future directions, approaches and priorities for nuclear security. The tenth anniversary of the Trieste International School on Nuclear Security will be celebrated with a dedicated side event organized in the margins of the Conference.

Madam President,

Italy highly values the technical assistance and cooperation programs implemented by the Agency and in the current year it has again provided its full contribution to the Technical Cooperation Fund, amounting to over 3 million Euros. Additional voluntary contributions are being considered to support projects jointly carried out by the joint division IAEA/FAO to fulfill specific needs of Least Developed Countries. A further specific support in this respect has been provided by making available to the same division an Associate Immunology Officer for a period of two years.

In 2019 Italy has also hosted a large number of **foreign researchers** in its laboratories, universities and medical centres in the framework of fellowships financed **under the Agency's technical cooperation programme**. Furthermore, a two-year **Master of Advanced Studies in Medical Physics jointly run by the ICTP and the University of Trieste** continues to enable young graduates to become clinical medical physicists in their home countries.

Also in the field of nuclear applications Italy is giving a significant contribution to international research and development activities. We are proud of promoting the advancement of nuclear medicine through various initiatives, such as, recently, the project for the production of technetium isotopes for diagnostic purposes carried out by ENEA (the Italian National Agency for New Technologies, Energy and Sustainable Economic Development) at its TRIGA reactor in Rome and the program of studies on Boron Neutron Capture Therapy (BNCT) and on copper isotope production for theranostics application at the LENA TRIGA Reactor of Pavia University. In this connection, last February ENEA approved a three-year project /for the production of Molybdenum-99 solutions at local level. Moreover ENEA, in collaboration with the Lazio Region and the National Institute for Health, is carrying out the TOP-IMPLART project, designing and building, at the ENEA center in the town of Frascati, an innovative compact linear accelerator for proton therapy, which will be the experimental prototype for treatment of superficial and semi-deep tumors.

The National Institute for Nuclear Physics (INFN), is also focusing on state-of-the-art nuclear applications, such as radiotherapy with ion beams and accelerator-based alternatives to Uranium-based production of radioisotopes of medical interest. The INFN participates in the research on fusion by applying its competence in accelerator technology, in particular within the International Fusion Materials Irradiation Facility (IFMIF) project. The Institute also continues its research programs on nuclear data relevant for innovative nuclear systems and on hybrid systems for the incineration of nuclear waste. Concerning safeguards, it pursues new technologies for the safety and security of radioactive waste and spent fuel, both during transport and storage, that could offer enhanced and cost-effective surveillance of repositories and ports.

In the field of agricultural and animal-health nuclear applications, the Centro Agricoltura Ambiente “G. Nicoli” in Bologna has been for years an IAEA Collaborating Centre in the development and implementation of a Sterile Insect Technique package for Aedes Mosquitoes suppression. Moreover, a dedicated laboratory for isotopic and radiometric studies of agri-food products has been set up by ENEA, with the purpose of ensuring food safety and security and meet the consumers’ needs by monitoring the agri-food supply chain and tracking the geographical origin of food.

My country is actively engaged in advancing research on fusion and innovative nuclear systems, too. In this context, construction work for the Divertor Tokamak Test Facility (DTT), the international centre of excellence for nuclear fusion research to be built by ENEA in collaboration with European and international partners, has already started. The DTT aims at meeting some of the greatest challenges posed by fusion, with the objective of creating a connecting link between the international nuclear fusion project ITER and the reactor DEMO.

Another important field of cooperation is represented by Non-Destructive Testing, which is a key tool for quality control, safety and reliability. A few days ago the IAEA and the Italian Society for Non-Destructive Testing Monitoring and Diagnostics have signed a cooperation agreement through which Italian expertise and industry will be able to offer their contribution to the Agency's work in this area.

Italian institutes and companies conduct research activities also on nuclear data, innovative nuclear systems, including systems for radioactive waste management, and methods and technologies to strengthen nuclear safeguards, safety and security as well as nuclear forensics.

Italy indeed believes that any project involving nuclear energy, as well as any technology or application making use of radioactive materials should integrate elements of safeguards, safety, security, emergency preparedness and response. Only such synergies can grant a long-lasting sustainable approach, as well as the actual well-being and protection of both the population and the environment.

Before concluding, allow me to invite all delegations to visit the Italian space in the Joint EU, Belgian, Finnish and Italian stand in the Rotunda. Our space is dedicated to the theme "Nuclear Technology Applications in Italy: from the past to the future" and highlights the results of Italian research, activity and applications in the field of peaceful uses. Every day until Thursday, during the lunch break very short seminars will showcase the applications of nuclear technologies to archaeology, art, medicine, energy, society and the environment. Italian delicacies will also be offered.

Madam President,

Please, rest assured of my delegation's full support and cooperation throughout this week. We are ready to work in a constructive way with all delegations for a successful Conference.

Thank you.