



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
and International Cooperation

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

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Statement delivered by H. E. Benedetto Della Vedova, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy

Mr. President,

While congratulating you on your election, I am pleased that my Country is chairing this year the General Conference, the most prominent event of the IAEA.

Aligned with the statement delivered by the Czech Republic on behalf of the EU, I will add some comments in my national capacity.

I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to commend Director General Grossi and his staff for their work over the past year. We strongly appreciate the crucial role that the Agency is playing in these increasingly difficult circumstances. The DG can rest assured that Italy will continue supporting the whole range of the IAEA's activities.

Mr. President,

The unprovoked and unlawful aggression launched by the Russian Federation continues to affect also the Ukrainian nuclear facilities. Italy praises the accomplishment of the recent IAEA Support and Assistance Mission to the **Zaporizhzhia NPP**, commending the DG's efforts to assess the situation on the ground professionally, independently and objectively, to assist the Ukrainian management and staff, and to establish a nuclear safety and security protection zone in and around Europe's largest nuclear power plant.

Shortly after DG Grossi's return from Ukraine, at a meeting in Rome Prime Minister Draghi expressed his full support, for his and the Agency's team determination in tackling the worrisome consequences - in particular for the seven indispensable pillars to ensure nuclear safety and security during armed conflicts - arisen from the Russian large-scale armed attack on Ukraine.

Mr. President,

The 2015 **Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action** on the Iranian nuclear programme remains for Italy a crucial element of the global non-proliferation architecture and a successful achievement of multilateral diplomacy. We have repeatedly called for the complete and effective application of the Deal by all the parties involved and we have welcomed the Vienna Talks aimed at re-establishing its integrity after the withdrawal of the United States in 2018. Italy regrets that, although the negotiations have substantially progressed, after a year and a half they have not yet come to their conclusion. At the same time, the current advancement of Iranian nuclear research and development is not conducive to an early end of the present stalemate and represents an increasing concern. We urge Iran to return to fully implement its obligations under the **JCPoA**.

In this context, Italy greatly appreciates the efforts of the IAEA's inspectors for conducting their verification and monitoring duties in Iran, despite the limitations progressively imposed by those authorities on their access to sites and data.

My Country shares the Director General's serious concern about a possible resuming of nuclear testing by the **DPRK**. The indications of the continuation of its nuclear programme and the increasing number of unlawful missile launches this year represent clear violations of numerous UN Security Council resolutions and a severe threat to international and regional peace and security. Underscoring that the actions taken cannot confer to the DPRK the status of a nuclear weapon State or any special status whatsoever, we commend the Agency for its readiness to return on-site for performing its essential verification role, as soon as conditions allow.

The **IAEA's system of safeguards** remains crucial for the non-proliferation architecture and for our security. In this respect, the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements, together with the Additional Protocols represent the current verification standard and we deem that their universalization should be pursued without delay. Our national competent regulatory Authority (ISIN) has developed and is operating an integrated informatics system (STRIMS) for tracing all the nuclear and radioactive materials used, stored or transferred in Italy.

Mr. President,

Italy is a party to all main international conventions in the field of **nuclear safety**, actively supporting the IAEA in its continuous efforts to develop standards on all aspects in this matter and calling on all Countries that have or intend to develop a nuclear power program to adhere to the relevant international instruments.

We are fully committed to the enforcement of the Code of Conduct on the safety and security of radioactive sources and its supplementary guidance. The Italian competent regulatory Authority ISIN is engaged in the modernization and upgrading of the automatic national monitoring network for early warning in case of nuclear or radiological emergency.

Mr. President,

We remain fully engaged in the achievement of a better international **nuclear security** environment, sustaining the central role of the IAEA in this framework and encouraging all Member States to fulfil their respective responsibilities.

Italy ratified the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (A/CPPNM) and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism

(ICSANT). We actively participate – among others – in the activities of the Nuclear Security Contact Group (NSCG) and in the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT). The Italian Government funds the **International School on Nuclear Security**, jointly run by the IAEA and the International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) in Trieste, with a financial support amounting to 360,000 euro over the last five years.

The recent donation made by CAEN, a leading Italian company in the field of nuclear systems, of technical equipment to the Agency’s Nuclear Security Training and Demonstration Center (NSTDC) in Seibersdorf, is yet another proof of our commitment.

Mr. President,

Italy highly values the **technical assistance and cooperation** programmes implemented by the Agency and will renew in 2022 its full contribution, close to 3 million euro, to the Technical Cooperation Fund, while a specific support has been provided by making available to the joint IAEA/FAO division an Associate Immunology Officer for a period of two years.

With the improving of the pandemic situation, Italy is hosting again this year foreign researchers in its laboratories, universities and medical centers, while a two-year Master of Advanced Studies in Medical Physics jointly run by the ICTP and the University of Trieste enables young graduates to become clinical medical physicists in their home Countries.

In the area of **nuclear applications**, the National Institute for Nuclear Physics (INFN) is focusing on state-of-the-art techniques, such as radiotherapy with ion beams and accelerator-based alternatives to uranium-based production of radioisotopes of medical interest.

Italy has been providing as well relevant inputs in the field of environmental, agricultural and animal-health nuclear applications, in particular thanks to the cooperation between the Centro Agricoltura Ambiente “G. Nicoli” in Bologna and the IAEA.

We are also engaged in advancing research on fusion and innovative fission systems, with several leading Italian institutions and companies at the forefront in this endeavor. Let me just mention, in this regard, the Divertor Tokamak Test facility (DTT), currently under construction at ENEA’s research center in Frascati (Rome), representing one of the main projects in the Controlled Thermonuclear Fusion Activity of this decade. Moreover, Italy is involved in several research projects related to small modular reactors, for which our industry is ready to supply components.

In this vein, we encourage the Agency to continue all its activities related to peaceful uses of nuclear science and technologies.

To conclude, Mr. President, rest assured of my delegation’s full support and cooperation throughout this week. We are ready to work in a constructive way for a successful Conference.

Thank you.