Statement by the Italian Delegation to the OEWG on taking forward Nuclear Disarmament

Geneva, 15 May 2013

Mr. Chairman,
At the outset let me congratulate you on the assumption of this important responsibility. We wish you all the best in carrying out your task and assure you the full support of our delegation.

On 3 December 2012 at the UN General Assembly Italy was among the countries that supported Resolution 67/56 entitled “Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations” and notably the establishment of this Open Ended Working Group.

For my country, the achievement of a world free of nuclear weapons is an ambitious but imperative goal that deserves every possible effort to become a reality.

In this context we welcome the success of the negotiations between the United States and the Russian Federation which led to the signing and entry into force in February 2011 of the New START Treaty. We believe it is an important message to the world towards the elimination of all nuclear weapons. We also welcome the positive outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference and the progress realised so far in the preparation of the next Review Conference in 2015.

In the same very spirit we acknowledge the engagement of the P5 in carrying out their duties under the NPT. Unfortunately, article VI is very vague and leaves room for discretion in its implementation.

Nuclear disarmament is not a matter for a few but a general interest. Every nation should have a say on a subject the consequences of which constitute a great concern for the entire humanity.
Having said that, which for us it is an incontrovertible principle, we should be realistic.

Nuclear disarmament cannot be achieved with a click but it will be the result of a step by step process starting from a Treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons. It is our responsibility to engage ourselves with the aim to shorten this process to the maximum possible extent. We are firmly convinced that Nuclear Weapons States, doesn’t matter if parties or not to the NPT, will consider the possibility to get rid of their nuclear arsenals only upon guaranties that other States will not acquire analogous capabilities.

Mr. Chairman,

As I said in my premise, we salute the establishment of this Open Ended Working Group and we are firmly convinced that it can provide an important contribution on the road leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. All the good prospects are there for a positive achievement. A new setting and the participation of civil society can make the difference with the traditional formula. However the Conference on Disarmament remains the natural venue for this process although it needs a booster capable of giving new impetus to its work.

In this vein we sincerely hope that the CD will finally break the current stalemate and start giving substance to its work, also taking advantage of the results of this working group.

Thank you for your attention.