



**Statement by H.E. Archbishop Gabriele Caccia
Permanent Observer of the Holy See
at the General Exchange of Views
at the United Nations Disarmament Commission
during the 79th Session of the United Nations General Assembly
*New York, 7 April 2025***

Mr. Chair,

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you on your election as Chair of this Commission and to assure you of my Delegation's support for your leadership of this session.

As political instability and conflicts continue to rise across various regions of the world, many States have turned to military solutions in an effort to safeguard their sovereignty and protect their interests. However, this shift comes at a significant cost, not only in terms of financial resources but also in terms of the erosion of multilateralism, dialogue, and international cooperation, which have long been the cornerstones of our collective efforts. In such a climate, fear has become the driving force behind many defense policies, with deterrence often seen as the essential guiding principle. As Pope John XXIII wisely stated in his 1963 Encyclical *Pacem in Terris*:

“There is a common belief that under modern conditions peace cannot be assured except on the basis of an equal balance of armaments [...]. If one country increases its military strength, others are immediately roused by a competitive spirit to augment their own supply of armaments.”¹

These words, though spoken more than half a century ago, resonate deeply today, as the cycle of arms buildup and the logic of deterrence foster

¹ POPE JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris*, 110.

an atmosphere of suspicion and division, that pushes the international community further from the prospect of achieving lasting peace.

Nuclear Weapons

Mr. Chair,

At a time when the threat of nuclear conflict is once again alarmingly close, it is imperative to recommit, with renewed urgency, to the path of disarmament. The proliferation of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction multiplies risks and offers only the illusion of peace; it obscures the true path to peace.² Even today, deterrence is still used to justify the possession of nuclear weapons, despite the changing nature and complexity of conflicts and the undeniable reality that any use of these weapons would have catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences. These repercussions would not discriminate between combatants and non-combatants and would cause lasting damage, harming both present and future generations.

Against this background, the Holy See reiterates its call to all States to overcome the fallacy of nuclear deterrence and to accede to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), thus taking a decisive step towards a world free from nuclear weapons. The Holy See also encourages the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to engage in a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect during the forthcoming Third Session of the Preparatory Commission. It is essential that this session foster an atmosphere of dialogue and trust, and create the conditions for constructive negotiations in order to pave the way towards a consensual and meaningful agreement at the next Review Conference.

Emerging Technologies

Mr. Chair,

To achieve a stable and lasting peace, it is essential that the international community address the multiple challenges posed by the use of

² Cf. POPE FRANCIS, *Letter to Bishop of Hiroshima on the Occasion of the G7 Summit*, 19 May 2023.

emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, whose increasing weaponization could pose further existential risks.

In this regard, the Holy See encourages the family of nations to work together in order to establish a legal framework to address these new challenges.³ While such a framework may be beyond the immediate scope of this Commission, still the principles, guidelines, and recommendations developed here can nevertheless be a valuable contribution to the adoption of binding instruments to ensure that the use of new and emerging technologies does not fuel violent escalation of any kind, but rather benefits all humanity and peace worldwide.

Mr. Chair,

Allow me conclude by expressing my Delegation's sincere hope for a fruitful and constructive discussion over the coming weeks. In this regard, I would like to echo the words of Pope Francis, who reminds us that "*in the face of the increasingly concrete threat of a world war, the vocation of diplomacy is to foster dialogue with all parties, including those interlocutors considered less 'convenient' or not considered legitimized to negotiate. Only in this way is it possible to break the chains of hatred and vengeance that bind and to defuse the explosive power of human selfishness, pride and arrogance, which are the root of every destructive determination to wage war.*"⁴

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

³ Cfr. POPE FRANCIS, [Message for the 57th World Day of Peace](#), 1 January 2024, 8.

⁴ POPE FRANCIS, *Address to Members of the Diplomatic Corps Accredited to the Holy See*, 9 January 2025.