



**Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC)  
Preparatory Committee of the Eighth Review Conference  
Geneva, 8-12 August 2016**

**General Exchange of Views  
Statement by H.E. Ambassador Vinicio Mati,  
Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament**

Mr. Chair,

I would like to congratulate you once again on your appointment as Chair of the Preparatory Process and President-Designate of the next BTWC Review Conference, and to thank you for your able guidance of our work, particularly for your transparent and cooperative approach in leading our preparations for the Review Conference. We look forward to continue working with you and your team.

Let me also congratulate the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire and the Republic of Angola on recently becoming States Parties to the Convention.

Italy aligns itself with the statement that the European Union will deliver later on.

Mr Chair,

The upcoming Review Conference will be a key opportunity to take stock of our past work, and to set the bases for our continued engagement in the next five years.

We consider a very positive fact and a strong sign of vitality that so many Working Papers have been submitted on several of the issues that will be the focus of our discussions this week and in November. Italy is paying its utmost attention to these proposals.

In my statement in April, I already underlined some of the Italian areas of priority, which include universalization of the Convention and strengthening the Confidence-Building Measures.

We see value in further discussing ways to increase the participation in the CBMs, and to allow States to make better use of the exchanged information.

Based on the positive experiences of some States Parties on voluntary peer reviews, we believe it would also be useful to assess the potential for such initiatives to further foster transparency and facilitate the exchange of best practices.

Italy is also actively engaged in international assistance and cooperation activities, which include programmes on controlling infectious disease, ensuring emergency interventions and biomedical treatment.

As such, we fully support strengthening implementation of art. X, including as relates to its contribution to building national capacities to address instances contemplated in art. VII.

We also agree with other delegations that there is scope for making the intersessional process more incisive. We see merit in giving priority to more focused and in-depth discussions, and in favouring greater involvement of experts.

The possibility to conduct such exchanges in the format of Working Groups or Coordination mechanisms, as in other disarmament regimes, could be usefully considered.

We will also closely consider proposals that have been made to broaden the authority of the Meetings of the States Parties.

The meetings we have held since the 7<sup>th</sup> Review Conference have clearly underlined the fundamental role of reviews of scientific and technological developments that could affect implementation of the BTWC, both positively and negatively.

We agree that a more systematic process for such reviews would be highly beneficial.

Therefore, we are ready to continue discussing possible options in this regard, also based on the proposals presented in the working papers.

We are equally open to evaluate the possibility to strengthen the role of the ISU, whose contribution to BWTC implementation is of the utmost importance.

Before concluding, Mr. Chair, allow me to stress that Italy greatly appreciates the active engagement of civil society in our work. Civil society organizations constitute critical partners for our assistance programmes, and make valuable contributions to our discussions.

In this vein, we greatly welcome the scheduling, during this week, of an informal session allowing NGOs to share their views and proposals with the membership.

Thank you, Mr. President.