



Statement by H. E. Ambassador Vinicio Mati
Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament
Geneva, 17 May 2016

Madam President,

Before turning to the proposed Convention on Chemical and Biological Terrorism, I would like to thank H.E. Minister Syed Tariq Fatemi of Pakistan and Mr. Lassina Zerbo, Executive Secretary of the CTBTO for their interventions. We also express our appreciation for this initiative on the CTBT, timely taken on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Treaty. In this regard, Italy fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union.

I would also like to thank Amb. Ulyanov for his intervention and for the revised food-for-thought paper that we recently received from the Russian Delegation, which provides some observations on the value added of the proposed Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Chemical and Biological Terrorism. We appreciated that, in line with a suggestion by Italy and other Countries, the Russian Federation widened the scope of its first proposal, in order to include also acts of biological terrorism.

In terms of substance, I cannot but reiterate what I had the opportunity to state during the informal plenary of 29 March, that this proposal addresses a real and topical issue. The threat of chemical and biological terrorism affects all States and is a matter of concern for the international community as a whole. For its gravity and the security risks it entails, this matter deserves full attention and due consideration. We, therefore, thank the Russian Delegation for drawing attention to this subject, and for pointing out the urgency of tackling it.

In our view, a new convention like the one proposed by the Russian Federation could be a relevant tool to improve security and information-exchange, and to strengthen judicial cooperation and legal assistance among States in the field of chemical and biological terrorism. Such a treaty could complement the existing international regime on countering biological and chemical weapons proliferation, and the risk of terrorist attacks conducted with the use of weapons of mass destruction. In our ongoing assessment yet to be finalized, we are inclined to acknowledge that legal gaps exist with regard to chemical and biological terrorism, especially if compared to the instruments in force to tackle nuclear terrorism, such as the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

On the way forward, we are aware of the Russian Delegation's position that the proposed Chemical and Biological Terrorism Convention should be negotiated in the framework of the CD, and have carefully listened to the additional elements provided by Amb. Ulyanov in this regard.

We will be eager to pursue this option, if consensus emerges in the CD. However, our preference would be for the UN framework, in particular the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly, following the example set by the Nuclear Terrorism Convention.

Madam President,

We firmly believe that no effort should be spared to put the CD back on track.

In this vein, I take the opportunity to reaffirm that negotiations on a fissile material treaty remain a priority for us. For this reason, we supported the US proposal for the commencement of negotiations without preconditions on a treaty dealing with fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. This is in line with our long-standing position, consistently advocated during the work of the GGE on the FMCT.

The early commencement of negotiations on an FMT would also be a concrete step towards the full implementation of the objectives of art. VI of the NPT, an issue that was discussed at length during last week's OEWG on multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations.

In the same vein, we also expressed support for the UK proposal to establish a "Working Group and an associated programme of work to identify, elaborate and recommend effective measures on nuclear disarmament".

Therefore, Madam President, we stand ready to continue supporting any constructive effort towards a reasonable compromise on the way forward to adopt a Programme of Work for this 2016 session of the CD that would be acceptable to all.

Thank you, Madam President.