



Statement by H. E. Ambassador Vinicio Mati
Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament
Geneva, 15 March 2016

Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to thank you for your endeavours in trying to reach an agreed way forward for this year's CD session, and to assure you of my delegation's continued full cooperation. In particular, we appreciated your efforts in conducting a wide range of consultations, in both bilateral and multilateral formats, in order to facilitate the achievement of consensus.

Late last week, we were informed by the current WEOG Coordinator – the Israeli Delegation, which we warmly thank for its effectiveness in fulfilling this mandate – that you convened further multilateral informal consultations in a restricted format, which we understand did not lead to any breakthrough.

On this meeting, Mr President, let me make a procedural point. We cannot but note that, during this session, each CD President has adopted different criteria relating to participation in these restricted meetings that, in our perception, are not always clear.

Without questioning the prerogatives of the Presidency, we wonder if this is the best way to ensure the necessary inclusiveness and transparency of this process, with a view to increasing its effectiveness. Therefore, allow me to suggest that the next informal meetings remain open to “all interested States”, in accordance with the consolidated practice of the previous years.

Mr. President,

As for the Programme of Work, we currently have four proposals on the table. This is an important sign of the Member States' determination in getting the Conference back to work.

Italy has already made a constructive contribution by expressing its support for the draft PoW introduced by the delegation of the United States, which is in line with our priority of commencing negotiations on a Treaty dealing with fissile materials without preconditions. We are still firmly convinced that an FMT remains the next logical step in the path towards nuclear disarmament.

We also consider the proposals put forth by the UK and the Nigerian delegations as genuine efforts to overcome the deadlock of the Conference. We expressed our preference for the UK draft Programme, as, in our view, it embodies a pragmatic and flexible approach allowing different ideas and inputs to be presented, and that also provides for greater involvement of civil society in the work of the Conference.

As for the Russian proposal, we recognize it has the merit of addressing a serious and real problem, such as the threat posed by acts of chemical terrorism, which affects all States and is a matter of concern for the international community as a whole.

From our perspective, we are open to continuing discussions with a view to further exploring the different aspects of the Russian proposal in the framework of the CD if there is consensus, or in the framework of other venues with relevant expertise in New York or in the Hague.

Like others, we are mindful of the importance and urgency of overcoming the CD stalemate, and allowing it to play its unique role in the multilateral disarmament machinery.

For this reason, we stand ready to support any possible and reasonable compromise on the way ahead, with a view to allowing the CD to adopt a Programme of Work for the 2016 session.

Thank you, Mr President.