



Statement by H. E. Ambassador Vinicio Mati
Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament
Geneva, 23 February 2016

Mr. President,

Let me join the previous speakers in congratulating you on assuming the Presidency of the Conference and assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation. Let me also seize this opportunity to thank the outgoing Nigerian Presidency for its efforts to reach agreement on a Programme of Work that would be acceptable to all CD Member States.

Mr President,

As I had the occasion to state at the opening of this year's CD session, for Italy the Conference on Disarmament remains a cornerstone of the multilateral disarmament machinery. Preserving its primary role in promoting substantive negotiations on disarmament and non-proliferation, and overcoming its current deadlock, therefore, remain paramount.

We appreciate any efforts aimed at encouraging the discussion with a view to finding common ground on how to overcome the current situation.

In this vein, we have welcomed the proposal for a Programme of Work submitted by the United States, and also welcome the latest draft decision on a PoW submitted by the United Kingdom.

We believe that this proposal embodies an innovative approach, by providing a more flexible structure in which every CD Member can present its ideas and input. We particularly welcome the increased involvement of civil society in the work of the Conference.

From the point of view of substance, we share the emphasis put by the UK proposal on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, which is fully in line with our priorities. As we have consistently stated, Italy is ready to engage actively on all the Conference's core agenda items. Nonetheless, the commencement of negotiations on an FMT remains our primary focus as the next logical step in the path towards nuclear disarmament.

Finally, I share the view that the UK proposal would usefully complement the work currently ongoing at the OEWG, which started its substantive session yesterday. Taken together, these processes will allow us to have a comprehensive view of all issues and perspectives, including those of the nuclear weapon States, and to have sufficient time to address them.

Thank you, Mr President.