



Statement by H. E. Ambassador Vinicio Mati
Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament

Geneva, 11 March 2014

Mr. Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament,
Excellencies, distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

This is the last plenary meeting I have the privilege to chair as President of this Conference.

In my opening speech I stated that I founded the exercise of my Presidency on the principles of transparency, effectiveness and continuity among the P6.

My intention was to confirm an innovative approach in finding possible ways to put the Conference in a position to overcome its current difficulties in a pragmatic, realistic and constructive way.

In line with my Country's traditional engagement on disarmament and non-proliferation issues, my main objective remains to preserve and revitalize the credibility of this forum.

In this vein I have warmly welcomed and shared the message addressed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the Conference inviting to take inspiration and make 2014 a year of creativity and action.

We need to give a sign of vitality to this forum otherwise the Conference on Disarmament will be definitely marginalised and overcome by events, losing its credibility in the international arena.

In order to avoid this negative development, I think that a certain amount of flexibility is required from all of us.

I'm convinced that flexibility and protection of national interests are not contradictory.

On the contrary they are mutually reinforcing and both of them can be exercised at the same time.

Keeping this in mind, as recommended by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, I tried to work in a constructive spirit and to build on the progress, even though modest, made last year.

As you know our approach was based on the re-establishment of an informal working group with the mandate to produce a programme of work and, in parallel, on the adoption of a schedule of activities that includes structured discussion on the various items of our agenda.

In this spirit I tried to build on the constructive work carried out by the previous President and I hope to leave to my successors a situation characterized by further progresses on the same path.

In this prospect the renewal of the informal working group with the mandate to produce a programme of work has to be seen as a positive step toward the resumption of the role of the Conference on Disarmament.

I think that these two processes, the work of the informal working group and the schedule of activities, although different from an operational and conceptual point of view are to be conducted in a parallel way.

These two exercises have been conceived separately but in our view they need to be implemented in a mutual reinforcing way with the aim of achieving our main objective that is to have a 2014 session of the Conference more fruitful and productive than the ones we had in previous years.

Now we need to work in order to speed up the decision also on the second track.

During the last few days I have strongly intensified my consultations both with the regional groups and at a bilateral level.

From these consultations, I perceived a general expectation to put forward a proposal on a schedule of activities.

Therefore, in accordance with the other P6, we have decided to circulate as soon as possible a draft proposal.

In this regard I would like to remind you that we are still waiting from the regional groups, the names of the coordinators and their preferences for the various topics.

We do not have much time in order to complete our task, given the fact that this decision has to be taken by the end of this month if we want to conduct the envisaged structured discussions by the end of the current session.

This is the reason why I would like to urge a decision concerning the nomination of the coordinators.

I am confident that we will be able to make the necessary progress also on the second track in a delay which allows us to conduct a fruitful structured dialogue on the priority issues of our agenda.

Thank you for your attention.

Concluding remarks

Before concluding my last plenary meeting, let me reiterate that it has been a great pleasure and a true honour to have the privilege to preside the Conference on Disarmament over the last four weeks.

My efforts have been aimed at building on the constructive work carried out by the previous President and I hope to leave to my successors a situation characterized by further progresses on the same path.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your cooperation and constructive approach.

I would also like to extend my appreciation to the Acting Secretary-General Mr. Michael Møller, the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Jarmo Sareva, the Secretary of the Conference, Mr. Ivor Fung, all the staff from the Secretariat and the interpreters. I

would like to thank them for the strong support they gave me in carrying on my institutional task as President of the Conference.

I would also like to thank the coordinators of the regional groups for their constructive support to my work.

My warmest thanks also go to the other members of the P6 for the high level of cooperation assured to my Presidency and for the extremely positive atmosphere they contributed to create within our Group.

A special thanks go to the Italian Deputy Permanent Representative, Brigadier General Mario Amadei for the huge work done during our Presidency and for the high professional quality of his contribution to further advance the work of the Conference.

I would like to congratulate and express my best wishes to my successor, Ambassador Toshio Sano for a fruitful and successful work.

I am convinced that under his Presidency, the work of the Conference will benefit from his deep knowledge, his long term experience and his outstanding professional level.