



*Ministero degli Affari Esteri*

## **ITALY**

### **Statement by H.E. Hon. Benedetto Della Vedova Secretary of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

*Mr President,*

*Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen*

*At the outset, I wish to reiterate Italy's commitment to the work of this Conference and congratulate you Ambassador for assuming the **Presidency of this Assembly**. Roughly a decade ago Italy has performed this role for the last time and it is a great pleasure for me to address for the first time this Conference that still represents the most important multilateral disarmament negotiating forum for the international community as a whole.*

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*Mr President,*

*Italy attaches great importance to disarmament in its broadest sense and it is fully committed to disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation as essential components of its foreign policy. We firmly believe that multilateralism and international cooperation are crucial to effective, concrete and long-term results in these fields. Therefore, Italy will continue to be actively engaged in all multilateral fora, including this Conference, the United Nations, the European Union and the G8, as well*

as in the context of major international treaties on both conventional arms and WMD-related issues.

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*Mr President,*

*As we are all aware, recent events have clearly shown how important these principles are in the broader context of disarmament. Let me briefly recall **two main examples.***

*On **conventional arms**, 2013 marked an important turning point with the adoption of the **Arms Trade Treaty** by the UN General Assembly and its formal signature last June. Far from being exclusively a Treaty on arms trade, once entered into force the ATT will be a binding multilateral instrument able to foster respect for human rights.*

*As it is well known, it introduced for the first time a binding criteria on prevention of gender-based violence, thus including the gender perspective and the concept of human security in the broader context of global security. Much remains to be done and the entry into force will not happen overnight, but the signing of the ATT is undoubtedly a multilateral success story.*

*On **WMD disarmament**, the criminal attacks with massive use of chemical agents in Syria reminded us of the catastrophic consequences of any use of weapons of mass destruction. Since the very beginning, Italy has strongly advocated a multilateral response to the use of chemical weapons in Syria with the aim of preventing any further bloodshed or other harmful alternatives. The plan for the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons is the most important multilateral disarmament operation of the last decade*

*and Italy is actively contributing to the efforts of the UN-OPCW (Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons) joint mission with logistic, financial and technical support.*

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***Mr President,***

*In this context, as the UN Secretary General rightly mentioned in his remarks to this Assembly, it is worth recalling that the Chemical Weapons Convention was negotiated here, within the Conference on Disarmament.*

*The Conference and its predecessors have had some impressive accomplishments. Other major multilateral arms control and disarmament agreements have been negotiated within this walls, such as the Non Proliferation Treaty, the Biological Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.* *This Assembly thus played a crucial role in the field of disarmament and non proliferation, greatly contributing to make the world safer.*

*As a matter of fact, the threats and the risks associated to the spread of WMD are incalculable and it is essential to redouble our efforts to prevent new states as well as non-state actors gaining access to them. This is why the deadlock of the “disarmament machinery” is no longer acceptable. Italy fully agrees with the words addressed to this Assembly by the UN Secretary General “The Conference on Disarmament can be a driving force for building a safer world and a better future. That is its very mission”.*

*This Conference should resume its work without any further delay. The adoption of a Programme of Work and the start of effective discussion on key issues should be a main concern and to this end flexibility will be essential.*

*Therefore, I would like to express **satisfaction for the recent renewal of the Informal Working Group, as a first concrete step forward.***

*A constructive and creative approach is needed to face the challenges ahead and it is our fundamental task to restore the credibility and the central role of this Assembly in taking forward effective multilateral negotiations on its core issues, nuclear disarmament, FMCT, NSAs and outer space. On this latter point, Italy is fully committed together with the EU in pushing forward negotiations for the adoption of a International Code of Conduct on outer space activities.*

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*Mr President,*

*As regards **nuclear issues**, the upcoming months will be crucial for both disarmament and non proliferation. The Third NPT Preparatory Committee is approaching, the last one before the 2015 RevCon, while within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament the newly established Group of Governmental Experts will soon start its work with the aim of revitalising the negotiations on a Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices.*

*Bringing to an end the ongoing stalemate of this Conference will represent a major driving force to boost progress on the challenges ahead. It is therefore of paramount importance to end this continued stalemate to*

*avoid jeopardizing the credibility of the Conference of Disarmament that still has the potential to play a central role in disarmament negotiations.*

*The responsibilities of nuclear weapons States in moving forward on nuclear disarmament remain unquestionable. We welcome the increased transparency shown by nuclear weapon States as well as the efforts made by the United States and the Russian Federation in implementing the New START Treaty. These represent significant steps in enhancing international confidence-building and transparency measures in the field of nuclear disarmament.*

***The Non Proliferation Treaty** continues to represent the essential foundation for the achievement of nuclear disarmament. We want to reaffirm our commitment to creating the conditions for a safer world without nuclear weapons, in accordance with Article VI of the NPT. Some critics argue that the NPT is no longer able to tackle new challenges. We want to firmly stress that the NPT is a tool serving a political will.*

*We should redouble our commitment to achieve progress based on considering the three pillars of the NPT as mutually reinforcing. Therefore, it is essential to participate constructively and substantively in all relevant discussions on nuclear disarmament with a clear focus on practical and effective measures.*

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*Mr President,*

*Italy is also fully engaged in supporting the entry into force of the **Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty** that would strengthen the international*

*non-proliferation regime, significantly contributing to the goal of a world without nuclear weapons. The complete ban on nuclear tests is a crucial step. The last nuclear test carried out by North Korea clearly demonstrated the urgent need for this Treaty's earliest possible entry into force. The New Executive Secretary of the CTBT recently established a "Group of Eminent Persons" to help Member States to facilitate the Treaty's entry into force. My Minister Ms Federica Mogherini is a member of this Group since its establishment.*

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*Mr President,*

*within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament, the negotiations on a treaty **banning the production of fissile material** remain a priority. This treaty would be an instrument able to foster both disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. In May 2013, as a follow-up of Resolution 67/53, Italy submitted to the UN Office for Disarmament its views on an **FMCT (Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty)** addressing five issues: definitions, verifications, nuclear fuel, production plants and stockpiles. Keeping in mind the need for maximum effectiveness in the application of an FMCT, we believe that the agency tasked with verifications should be the IAEA, which already has the necessary operational experience, trained personnel and technical knowledge to this end. Stockpiles remain the real stumbling block. The views expressed so far in the Conference on Disarmament, unsurprisingly, have been radically different, but in this line of work nothing is ever black or white. Thinking it through should lead to possible compromise solutions.*

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*Mr President,*

*In the past few months, some tangible results have been achieved on high priority dossiers. Syria acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention and a common understanding on the Iranian nuclear programme has been reached here in Geneva. On this latter point, let me reiterate our full support for the role of the IAEA in carrying out the complex task of verifying the implementation of the Joint Action Plan. Negotiations are also moving forward on the issue of the convening of a conference on the establishment of a WMD Free Zone in the Middle East. The time is ripe to exploit the progresses made so far and to redouble our efforts to begin substantive negotiations and achieve mutually reinforcing results in all major disarmament and non proliferation fora.*

***Italy is fully committed and will not spare any effort in supporting the work of this Assembly.***

*Thank you Mr President.*