Mr President,

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to address for the second time this Conference that still represents the most important multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. I wish to reiterate Italy’s commitment to the work of this Conference and congratulate you Ambassador for assuming the Presidency of this Assembly. I also would like to express our gratitude to the Acting Secretary General, Mr. Michael Moeller, and to his team for their invaluable support to the work of the Conference.

***

Mr President,

Let me express our deep appreciation for your constructive approach and your intention to promote further substantive discussions on a Programme of Work as well as on the core items of the Agenda. We also welcome your proposal to create an “ad hoc Working Group” on CD working methods. Major multilateral arms control and disarmament agreements have been negotiated within this Conference or in its predecessor bodies, and they still represent impressive accomplishments of the negotiating forum of Geneva which contributes to making the world safer. This is why the deadlock of the “disarmament machinery” is no longer acceptable. 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.

Mr. President,

we warmly welcome the efforts to actively involve Civil Society in the discussions of this Assembly and we attach the utmost importance to their concrete and constructive contribution to the
activities of the CD. A greater interaction with NGOs committed to disarmament and non-proliferation would indeed enable the CD to benefit from valuable external expertise, and thus to advance its work. We strongly welcomed and gave our support to the Acting Secretary General’s proposal to convene an informal CD/Civil Society Forum on March 19th.

***

Mr President,

the upcoming months will be crucial for both disarmament and non-proliferation. The NPT Review Conference is approaching and we should redouble our efforts to achieve a successful outcome. The NPT is the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and an important element in the further development of nuclear energy applications for peaceful purposes. We want to reaffirm our commitment to create the conditions for a safer world for all without nuclear weapons, in accordance with Article VI of the NPT. Any further progress should be based on considering the three pillars of the NPT as mutually reinforcing. In this prospect we reaffirm our full support to the implementation of the 2010 Action Plan which includes concrete steps on nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Mr President,

As far as major regional crises are concerned, Italy gave a significant contribution to the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons, providing concrete assistance to both the UN and the OPCW. An Italian port facility was made available for the transloading of Syrian chemical agents before their subsequent destruction on a US vessel. Moreover, we strongly support the ongoing diplomatic efforts of the P5+1 and Iran to reach a final agreement on the Iranian Nuclear Programme. Looking forward to a mutually-agreed, comprehensive long-term solution of the Iranian nuclear issue, we sincerely hope that the March 31st deadline for reaching a political deal will allow to bridge the remaining differences. Furthermore, we commend the International Atomic Energy Agency for its crucial role of verification and monitoring. On the establishment of a Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone in the Middle East, we fully support the tireless efforts of the Facilitator and co-sponsors of the 1995 Resolution to reach consensus on a date and an agenda for the Helsinki Conference as soon as possible. We will continue to support their action towards the ongoing preparation for a successful Conference.

***
Mr President,

We share the widespread concerns over the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of a nuclear weapon. They are of serious concern for us and for those who share the goal of a world without nuclear weapons. The importance of this issue is clear. It was endorsed by the Final Document adopted at the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

It is of paramount importance to participate constructively and substantively in all relevant discussions on nuclear disarmament with a clear focus on practical and effective measures. On the contrary, we should avoid creating shortcuts that are not contributing to the mutually reinforcing goals of disarmament and non-proliferation.

Incremental steps towards nuclear disarmament represent a realistic way of reaching the Global Zero. We welcome the outcome of recent P5 Conference in London and the ongoing P5 process that contributes to increase transparency and building confidence among the Nuclear-Weapon States. Mutual trust and transparency are crucial to eventual multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations.

***

Mr President,

Italy is also fully committed to 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. At the end of March, we will host the 19th edition of the “Edoardo Amaldi Conference”, devoted this year to “International Cooperation for Enhancing Nuclear Safety, Security, Safeguards and Non-proliferation”, a two-day Conference which will provide an important forum for experts and scientists to discuss different approaches and promote progress towards enhanced nuclear safety, security, safeguards and non-proliferation.

Within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament, the negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material remain a priority. Italy is part of the Group of Governmental Experts on FMCT that will conclude its work soon with the aim of revitalising the negotiations on this Treaty. We welcome the substantive and fruitful discussions held within the GGE and I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Canadian Chair for her excellent work and effective leadership. We are looking forward to the conclusion of this exercise and to the Report of the Chair of the GGE in order to further advance the work of the CD on this issue. This is why, bringing to an end the ongoing stalemate of this Conference will represent a major driving force to boost progress on the challenges ahead.

***
Mr President,

Increasingly over the last few years, Italy has paid special attention to education, training and institutional capacity building as essential elements for fostering international peace and security. The International School on Nuclear Security established in 2010 with the IAEA and the International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) in Trieste will hold in 2015 its fifth annual training course. The School is highly regarded by the participants from both developing and emerging countries as it provides professionals with knowledge of the international legal framework on nuclear security, raising awareness on illicit trafficking in nuclear and other radioactive material.

We believe that educational efforts should lie at the root of any strategy, which aims at strengthening a global response to WMD threats and preventing non-state actors from gaining access to sensitive material and knowledge. For this reason, we announced a high-level event entitled “The Nuclear Security Summit 2016 and Beyond: the Role of Training and Support Centres, and Centres of Excellence” organized by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and the Italian National Agency for New Technologies, Energy and the Environment in cooperation with IAEA and the European Commission. The event will take place in Bologna on 7-8 May 2015.

***

Mr President,

I would like to recall the message of UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, “the need for progress in multilateral disarmament is greater than ever” because of increasing tensions and instability around the world. Italy will not spare any effort in supporting the work of this Assembly. Disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation are essential components of our foreign policy.

As a candidate to a non-permanent seat in the UN Security Council for the 2017-2018 term, Italy will further promote the disarmament agenda at the UN, as we have consistently been doing in all multilateral fora, including this Conference, the G7 and the EU.

Thank you Mr President.