



Statement by Ambassador Vinicio Mati
Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament
Geneva, 29 June 2017

Mr. Facilitator,

As per your proposed structure for the discussions, today I will provide some remarks on substantive elements relating to the issue of negative security assurances.

As I mentioned yesterday, Italy believes that negative security assurances have an important role to play in advancing both global and regional security.

The CD has a significant role to play and could give a decisive contribution to this debate, especially within the context of an agreed, comprehensive and balanced programme of work. Italy supports its continued engagement to discuss all aspects of this issue, as well as its endeavors directed to explore the possibility of arrangements aiming to strengthen NSAs as concrete instruments to advance nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation not excluding an internationally legally binding instrument.

Mr. Facilitator,

In Italy's view, the primary reason for which NSAs contribute to global security and stability rests in their contribution to the advancement of the goals of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation as set out in the NPT.

From the point of view of non-nuclear weapon states, the assurance that nuclear weapon ones will not threaten the use or use nuclear weapons against them would provide further confidence in the non-proliferation regime.

From the point of view of nuclear weapon states, NSAs reduce the number of possible targets, leading to a progressively more marginal role of nuclear arsenals in national and collective defence postures.

In this regard, however, I would like to underline two fundamental aspects.

First, we believe that negative assurances may be fully applied only to States that respect their non-proliferation obligations. In this respect, the membership in and full compliance with the NPT remains fundamental.

Second, while contributing to nuclear disarmament, NSAs should be considered as an interim step towards it. Our shared goal remains a world free of nuclear weapons and this should continue to be pursued in the framework of a progressive approach, focusing on effective measures, in accordance with Article VI of the NPT.

Finally, Mr. Facilitator, NSAs should not be seen in isolation, but as an essential complement to other initiatives such as the commencement of negotiations of a Treaty dealing with fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, entry into force of the CTBT, and the establishment of nuclear weapon free zones.

On this last point, the question of the establishment of a Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and all other Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East remains critical.

For this reason, we continue to strongly support the convening of a Conference on the establishment of such a zone – to be attended by all States of the region on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by them – in accordance with the decisions of the 1995 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences.

Thank you, Mr. Facilitator