



Statement by H. E. Ambassador Vinicio Mati
Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament
Geneva, 31 March 2016

Madam President,

Thank you for this opportunity for today's exchange of views.

Let me first of all thank the Russian Federation for the draft elements of a Convention on chemical terrorism and the related explanatory note they recently circulated. These allow us to better understand all the different aspects and implications of their proposal, and my Capital is studying these documents very carefully.

In terms of the substance of this proposal, we cannot but reiterate that it addresses a real and topical issue, a threat that affects all States and is a matter of concern for the international community as a whole.

For its gravity and the security risks it entails, this matter deserves full attention and due consideration. We, therefore, thank the Russian Delegation for drawing attention to this subject, and for pointing out the urgency of tackling this serious threat.

I also reaffirm that, in our view, it would be important to also address the problem posed by biological terrorism – a threat that is, perhaps, less immediate at this stage, but is no less alarming, and that equally deserves our attention. The existing legal framework does not seem to adequately address the use of biological agents or weapons in terrorist attacks, and the risks of these taking place should not be underestimated in the current security context.

In terms of substance, therefore, we cannot but express our strong appreciation for the Russian initiative.

From a procedural point of view, we note that the Russian draft PoW expresses a preference for negotiating the Convention on chemical terrorism in the framework of the CD, while acknowledging that “a whole range” of other fora would be suitable for such a task.

We also note, however, that consensus does not seem to be emerging among the membership on the fact that this forum would be the most appropriate body for negotiating such an instrument. In addition, the issue addressed in the Russian draft PoW pertains to anti-terrorist efforts as well as to disarmament and non-proliferation.

In light of this, we wonder whether it wouldn't be more effective to replicate the procedural path followed by the Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, which represents a good reference and a success story, and with which the proposed Chemical Terrorism Convention shares many substantive similarities.

Based on the genesis process of the Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, we consider that New York could be a viable alternative and an appropriate forum to negotiate a Chemical and Biological Terrorism Convention, in particular the United Nations General Assembly Sixth Committee, which is competent for legal matters, including measures to eliminate international terrorism.

Thank you, Madam President