



**Open-Ended Working Group on taking forward multilateral nuclear
disarmament negotiations**

**May session - Panel I (measures to reduce and eliminate the risk of
accidental, mistaken, unauthorized or international nuclear weapons
detonations)**

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

Geneva, 2 May 2016

Thank you, Mr. Chair for circulating the concept note in advance, which allowed us to better focus our preparations for this second round of exchanges.

Let me also thank our panelist, Dr. Patricia Lewis, for her excellent presentation.

Mr. Chair, we decided to participate in this exercise, because we fully share the goal of making progress on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and ultimately, achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.

From the start, we have engaged in the discussions with the firm intention to focus not on differences, but on common ground to identify effective measures needed to reach that goal.

During the February session, we had the opportunity to outline our position in our national statements, in a joint statement delivered by Canada on behalf of 19 countries. We also co-sponsored the Working Paper on a "Progressive Approach", jointly presented by 23 countries, which addresses all the issues that will be discussed in the next two weeks.

Regarding today's panel, we agree with the panelist that we need to think to prevention first.

In this vein the "Progressive Approach" paper contains indications of measures that could be taken to reduce the risks of accidental or unauthorized nuclear weapon detonations.

Several of these were already contained in the Action Plan adopted by the 2010 NPT Review Conference, whose implementation remains of the utmost importance and further discussed during the 2015 NPT Review Conference.

We recognize the need to reduce the risk of accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons through further practical measures to reduce the operational status of nuclear weapons systems in ways that promote international stability and security, as well as de-alerting nuclear weapon systems, which would reduce risks and build confidence among nuclear and non-nuclear weapon States.

In addition, and taking into account relevant security considerations, we support the balanced reduction in the number of deployed strategic nuclear weapons, of non-strategic and non-deployed nuclear weapons, as well as the reduction of the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines.

Pending entry-into-force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the declaration and maintenance of all existing moratoria on nuclear test explosions represents a further risk-reduction measure.

To this end, we would like to reiterate that involving nuclear states in this debate remains imperative, as they bear the primary responsibility for reducing such risks.

There is no alternative to this inclusive approach if we want to be effective in this process.

Along the same line of the distinguished Ambassador of Germany, as NATO Member State, we cannot but recognize that, "since the end of the Cold War, NATO has dramatically reduced the number, types and readiness of nuclear weapons stationed in Europe and its reliance on nuclear weapons in NATO strategy". In addition, in its 2012 "Deterrence and Defense Posture Review" and in the 2014 Wales Summit Declaration, NATO reiterated its strong commitment "to create the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons in accordance with the goals of the NPT". "While seeking to create the conditions and considering options for further reductions of weapons assigned to NATO, Allies concerned will ensure that all components of its nuclear deterrent remain safe, secure" and under positive control.

We also share the international community's concern about the possibility that nuclear weapons or materials may fall in the hands of militarized non-state actors or terrorists.

Italy is a Party to relevant international instruments, and a Signatory to the Convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism.

We also duly implement the commitments established by resolution 1540 and subsequent UNSC decisions, and have consistently voiced our support for strengthening this regime.

In conclusion, Mr. Chair, let me reiterate our firm intention to fully engage in a constructive manner in this process.

In the interest of focusing on what unites rather than on what divides, for the final common goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, it is our hope that the Group will pursue all avenues to reach a consensual conclusion.