



**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Vinicio Mati,
Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament
to the First Committee of the 69th UN General Assembly
General Debate
New York, 2014**

Mr. Chair,

Allow me to begin by congratulating you on your appointment as Chair of the 1st Committee of the 69th UN General Assembly, and to assure you of the full support of the Italian delegation for a successful outcome of this session.

Italy aligns itself with the statement of the European Union, and I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

Mr. Chair,

Italy attaches great importance to disarmament in its broadest sense. We are fully committed to disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation as essential components of our foreign policy. These topics are high on the agenda of the Italian Presidency of the EU in the current semester.

We firmly believe that multilateralism and international cooperation are crucial to effective, concrete and long-term results in the field of disarmament. Therefore, Italy will continue to be actively engaged in the main multilateral and international fora, particularly at the United Nations and the Conference on Disarmament, as well as in the framework of the major international treaties on both conventional arms and WMD-related issues.

One recent multilateral success is the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty, which Italy welcomes. Far from being exclusively a treaty on the

arms trade, the ATT will also be a binding multilateral instrument that fosters respect for human rights. By envisaging binding criteria for the prevention of gender-based violence, the treaty has, for the first time, included a gender perspective and the concept of human security in the broader context of global security.

In the nuclear sector, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is still the cornerstone of our international action. The Italian Parliament has committed the Government to play an active role in supporting nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Our national priorities are: full implementation of the NPT 2010 Action Plan; strengthening of the international non-proliferation regime; implementation of negative security assurances early entry into force of the CTBT; early commencement of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile materials; universalization of the IAEA Additional Protocol; establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems in the Middle East.

Mr. Chair,

The nuclear-weapons States have clear, unequivocal responsibilities in moving forward on nuclear disarmament. We welcome the encouraging steps they have taken and their increased transparency.

Italy fully supports the entry into force of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty, which will strengthen the international non-proliferation regime. We commend the ongoing work of the “Group of Eminent Persons” to facilitate the process. Italy is deeply involved in this exercise and committed to the goal of a global, legally-binding prohibition of all nuclear tests.

Mr. Chair,

The Conference on Disarmament plays a crucial role in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

The current deadlock of the “disarmament machinery” is no longer acceptable. We would therefore like to express our satisfaction for the efforts made during the 2014 session of the Conference on Disarmament to find a way forward to revitalize the work of the CD, and we stand ready to

support similar efforts in 2015. In the framework of the Conference, the negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material remain a priority. From our perspective, this treaty will promote both disarmament and non-proliferation. We welcome the constructive discussions within the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE), in which Italy actively participates, and we hope they will lay the ground for future negotiations.

Italy reaffirms its support for the process leading to the full implementation of the 1995 NPT Review Conference Resolution on the Middle East, and the practical steps endorsed by the 2010 NPT Review Conference. Therefore we reaffirm our support for convening a Conference – to be attended by all States of the region – on the establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and all other Weapons of Mass Destruction, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the States of the region. We regret that, so far, it has not been possible to convene the Conference and we acknowledge with gratitude the tireless efforts of the facilitator, Mr. Laajava. We will continue to support his action, and we call on all States of the Region to engage constructively with him.

We note that, since the 2010 NPT Review Conference, the issue of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons has gained attention and has been examined from both the disarmament and non-proliferation perspectives, in particular what the use of such weapons might mean for states and international organizations in terms of risks and response capacity. This issue will be further discussed at the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons on 8-9 December 2014, which, we hope, will make a positive contribution to a successful outcome of the next NPT Review Conference in 2015.

Mr. Chair,

Italy looks forward to achieving a comprehensive, negotiated, long-term settlement of the Iranian nuclear issue. In this prospect, we welcome the Joint Plan of Action reached on November 24, 2013, in Geneva, the Framework for Cooperation between Iran and the IAEA, and Iran's continued implementation of the measures under the Joint Plan of Action. It is vital that Iran engage fully with the IAEA to resolve all outstanding issues, in order to achieve a long-term settlement that builds international

confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme.

Italy would like to express its concern over the fact that Syria has yet to remedy its non-compliance with the IAEA Safeguards Agreement by providing the requested cooperation with the IAEA and signing, bringing into force and implementing an Additional Protocol as soon as possible.

We also condemn all use of chemical weapons in that Country. The recent use of chemical agents reminds us, once again, of the catastrophic effects of weapons of mass destruction. We consider the plan for the removal and destruction of Syrian chemical weapons the most important multilateral disarmament operation of the last decade. Italy actively contributed to the success of this operation by lending financial support to both the OPCW and the United Nations as well as by providing the Gioia Tauro port for the transloading of chemical substances.

Mr. Chair,

Italy fully agrees that the preservation of a safe and secure space environment and the peaceful use of outer space on an equitable and mutually acceptable basis are top priorities. In line with the recommendations of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency in Outer Space and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities, we see value in pursuing political commitments, and we support the EU proposal for an international voluntary Code of Conduct. This proposal is one of the TCBMs contained in the GGEs consensus report, which the UN General Assembly invited UN Member States to review and implement in last year's resolution 68/50.

Mr. Chair,

Italy strongly supports the goals of the Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention. Italian health and academic institutions actively participate in international training and capacity-building initiatives on bio-security and bio-safety and on other matters related to the BTWC.

Italy is likewise fully committed to international efforts to address the humanitarian, socio-economic and security impact of conventional weapons, with a view to halting their indiscriminate use. In this framework, we actively promote full implementation of the Convention on Certain

Conventional Weapons, the Convention on Cluster Munitions, and the Anti-Personnel Landmines Convention. We attach great importance to the universalization and national implementation of these Conventions, and to full compliance with their provisions. We acknowledge the positive role played by confidence-building measures, international cooperation and assistance, as well as by partnerships between States and all the other stakeholders involved in the implementation of the Conventions. In this respect, we welcome the fundamental contribution that civil society is providing.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.