



Statement by H. E. Ambassador Vinicio Mati
Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament
Geneva, 26 January 2016

Mr. President,

At the outset, let me congratulate you on your assumption of the responsibility as the first President of the 2016 session of the Conference on Disarmament. I would like to assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation for a productive involvement in this year's work.

I would also like to thank the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for conveying the UN Secretary-General's message, which we strongly welcome.

Mr. President,

Italy firmly believes that multilateralism and international cooperation are crucial to effective and long-term results in disarmament and non-proliferation. 2015 presented two landmark successes in this field: on the one hand, the agreement on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) between the E3/EU+3 and Iran; on the other, the successful conclusion of the first Conference of the States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty.

Both achievements show that multilateralism and international cooperation have an important role to play in disarmament and non-proliferation. In line with this, Italy will continue to be actively engaged in all the relevant fora, particularly the United Nations and the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr President,

The CD was established as the sole multilateral body to negotiate disarmament treaties, and in the past it has fulfilled this role very successfully, leading to the adoption

of legally binding instruments that are central for the preservation of international peace and security.

Today, after a deadlock of almost two decades, and in the face of the increasing tendency to bring disarmament negotiations outside the Conference, we fear that its relevance may be in danger. In our view, the CD remains a cornerstone of the multilateral disarmament machinery; preserving its primary role in promoting substantive negotiations on disarmament and non-proliferation, and overcoming its current deadlock, therefore, remains paramount.

Last year the Conference did not agree on a negotiating mandate. Nonetheless, our activities were intense and, in our view, very useful, and we look forward to continuing to focus on these positive elements as we approach this forthcoming session.

We continue to support efforts to reach agreement on a Programme of Work. We consider valuable the work conducted on this issue in 2015, and believe that we should build upon it in the current session. In this regard, let me once again thank Ambassador Päivi Kairamo of Finland for her endeavour to lead the Conference to a consensus outcome on this issue.

Mr President,

Italy has consistently voiced its strong support for the goal of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The NPT remains the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament.

We condemn in the strongest terms the nuclear test recently announced by the DPRK. This test constitutes a serious violation of several UNSC resolutions, of North Korea's obligations under the NPT and of the de facto international norm of a moratorium on nuclear tests. The DPRK shall return at an early date to the NPT and IAEA safeguards and shall abandon all nuclear weapons and nuclear programmes as well as all other existing weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

The Conference on Disarmament also has a key role to play on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. In this regard, the early commencement of negotiations within the CD on a Treaty dealing with fissile materials is our clear priority.

We believe that the substantive and constructive discussions we held last year on this issue should be built upon, and welcome any creative and flexible approaches leading to the start of negotiations without preconditions.

We also believe that the report of the Group of Governmental Experts of 2015 continues to represent a constructive contribution to the ongoing debate and to the future negotiations. Based on an impartial, in-depth, and open approach, the report reflects the various positions that were voiced, and presents all options on the table, thus constituting a useful and valuable resource for negotiators of a future Treaty.

Mr President,

While nuclear disarmament and negotiations on an FMCT are a priority for us, we are ready to engage in productive work on all the CD's agenda items.

Italy is also open to continue discussions on the CD's methods of work and to identify the most appropriate framework for this debate.

In this regard, we are keen to discuss ways in which the Conference could usefully interact more with civil society. We greatly appreciated the CD-civil society forum of last year, and look forward to further similar opportunities.

Thank you, Mr President.