



ITALY



**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Vinicio Mati,
Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament
to the First Committee of the 70th UN General Assembly
Thematic Discussion on Regional Disarmament and Security
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Mr. Chair,

Italy remains fully committed to effective multilateral action against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Despite the efforts made so far, the existence of proliferation programs and networks, the difficulty of securing sensitive materials, and the risk of terrorists getting access to them remain major challenges.

We value nuclear-weapon-free zones as important instruments to ensure peace and security, strengthen nuclear non-proliferation, and advance the objective of nuclear disarmament. We therefore commend the contribution of existing nuclear-weapon-free zones to attaining these goals.

Mr. Chair,

Because of its geopolitical position, Italy is part of the wider Mediterranean area and very close to the Middle East. Our history is intimately connected to this Region. We are very sensitive to developments in this context also from the point of view of disarmament and non-proliferation, and we follow them very closely.

We reaffirm our strong support for the process leading to the full implementation of the 1995 NPT Review Conference Resolution on the Middle East, and the related practical steps endorsed by the 2010 NPT Review Conference. We stress that the 1995 Resolution remains valid until it is fully implemented and its goals and objectives are achieved. While commending the tireless efforts of the Facilitator, Ambassador Laajava of Finland, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and the co-conveners, we regret that, so far, it has not been possible to convene such a Conference.

Therefore, we continue to support the convening of a Conference on the establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and all other Weapons of Mass Destruction - to be attended by all States of the region on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by them - as decided by the 2010 Review Conference.

We are convinced that the historic agreement of 14 July between the E3/EU+3 and Iran on a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), in full conformity with the principles of the NPT, will contribute to creating a more conducive environment for the process leading to the Conference.

As to other regional issues, we consider the plan for the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons, in line with UN Security Council Resolution 2118 and the decisions by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Executive Council, as the most important multilateral disarmament operation of the recent decade. Italy substantially contributed to this operation, providing concrete assistance to both the UN and the OPCW.

We also express our serious concern for the systematic and repeated use of chlorine as a chemical weapon in Syria since last year, confirmed in the reports of the OPCW Fact Finding Mission (FFM). Those responsible for such acts, must be held accountable. In this respect, we welcome the adoption of UNSC Resolution 2235 establishing a Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) to identify perpetrators responsible for chemical attacks in Syria. The International Community cannot remain silent in the face of these intolerable attacks.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.