



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 Conventional Weapons
New York, 26 October 2015**

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Mr. Chair,

Italy fully aligns itself to the statement of the distinguished representative of the European Union. I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

During the past decades, the international community has become increasingly aware of the pernicious consequences of illicit, unregulated, or irresponsible transfers of conventional arms in fueling conflicts; facilitating human rights and international humanitarian law violations, including gender-based ones; fostering crime and terrorism; and negatively affecting societies' stability and socio-economic development.

With the adoption and swift entry into force of the arms trade treaty, the international community has taken a decisive step towards curbing these negative phenomena and bringing responsibility, accountability, and transparency to the conventional arms trade.

Italy has been a strong supporter of the process leading to the ATT from the outset, and has been one of the first States to ratify it. We are now ready to engage with all relevant partners to its effective implementation. We welcome the successful outcome of the first Conference of States Parties held in Cancún last August, which led to important decisions on decision-making, management and

financing rules, the establishment of the ATT Secretariat and the appointment of its interim Head. We will also continue to work towards the universalization of the Treaty, which we consider critical to its effectiveness, particularly relating to the involvement of major arms producing States.

Mr. Chair,

We are fully committed to international efforts to address the humanitarian, socio-economic, and security impacts of conventional weapons. We welcome the Dubrovnik Political Declaration and Action Plan adopted by the First Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. I am also pleased to announce that our cluster munitions stockpile destruction process will be completed at the end of this month, five years ahead of the deadline established by the Convention.

We also strongly support the Anti-Personnel Landmines Convention and the Maputo Action Plan adopted last year. We have fully implemented it nationally and continue to cooperate for the ultimate fulfillment of its goals internationally.

We firmly believe that the CCW provides a unique forum, gathering diplomatic, legal, and military expertise, to address current and emerging issues relating to conventional weapons use and IHL. We welcome the discussions held in the CCW framework on Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) whose growing political and humanitarian impact, particularly on civilian populations, is cause for great concern. We also highly appreciated the meeting of experts' debates on the issue of emerging technologies in the area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS), and their contribution towards greater understanding of the multiple technical, legal, ethical, and military aspects that these involve.

Italy takes very seriously its responsibility to provide technical, material, and financial assistance to affected States Parties to these Conventions. Accordingly, we have been supporting mine action through a special Fund, established in 2001 that has to date disbursed a total amount of 45 million Euros.

Convinced that cooperation and assistance entail more than the provision of funds, we have offered training programmes, engaged in experience and knowledge sharing, as well as engaged in direct demining activities. In this regard, let me highlight the extensive clearance of ERW conducted by the Italian Armed Forces operating abroad, notably in Afghanistan and Lebanon.

In the implementation of our integrated mine action programs, we highly value partnerships at all levels. We are convinced that these need to be developed and strengthened among States as well as with the UN, other international and

regional organizations, civil society, survivors and their representative organizations.

Moreover, in our view mine action is more than a strictly humanitarian concern, although humanitarian considerations remain as relevant as ever. It has rather become part of States' development efforts. The full realization of victims' political rights, as well as their economic inclusion and adequate social protection, also in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, must, therefore, be promoted together with mine action.

Gender is a central theme for us. From a narrow perspective, evidence tells us that women are more seriously affected by cluster munitions, mines, and ERW. Their specific needs should therefore be taken into proper consideration. In a broader perspective, we have to ensure that relevant gender and ALL diversity aspects are taken into account, and that affected women, girls, boys, and men benefit from mine action activities on an equal basis.

Mr. Chair,

Italy remains committed to the effective implementation of the global instruments – politically and legally binding – aimed at curbing the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons and its adverse consequences on states and societies alike. We believe that, fourteen years after its adoption, the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms is still very relevant, as these weapons remain primary in any of today's armed conflicts. We note the useful discussions of the second Meeting of Governmental Experts of the PoA held last June, and welcome the Summary report issued under the Chair's responsibility.

Let me also underscore the importance of the UN Firearms Protocol in addressing the connection between SALW trade and transnational organized crime, as well as of the International Tracing Instrument. Together with the PoA, and if properly implemented, these provide a fundamental framework to address many of the challenges posed by illicit SALW-related activities.

Thank you, Mr Chair.