



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 Other Disarmament Issues
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Mr. Chair,

Italy is keenly aware of the importance of gender-based approaches for disarmament discussions and processes, and our government is at the forefront of international efforts to address all related issues, particularly in the context of conflict prevention and post-conflict recovery.

The relationship between gender and disarmament is complex, and must be addressed in at least two respects. On the one hand, based on a consolidated body of research, we know that conflicts do not have the same impact on different segments of the population. Men typically constitute the primary victims of direct armed violence; at the same time, women and children usually make up the majority of so-called “collateral damage” and of refugees and internally-displaced people. They also suffer more than men from the indirect impacts of conflict.

Adding a gender dimension to the disarmament debate means to identify and address these specific needs, for instance, in programmes destined to disarmament and, more importantly, to the reintegration of ex-combatants and their supporting networks (largely composed of women and youth) into post-conflict societies.

A second dimension of the gender debate specifically underlines the need for equal access and full participation of women in decision-making processes and in efforts aimed at both preventing and resolving conflicts. Women and girls play a crucial role in reconstruction: they represent the cornerstone of families and communities; they offer different perspectives on political, economic and social life; and they are critical actors in reconciliation.

With the first UN Security Council Resolution on “Women, Peace and Security” of 2000, the international community started addressing this specific aspect of the gender issue. Italy has supported this resolution from the start; it is also one of the 40 some countries in the world that have elaborated National Action Plans for its implementation.

Our second National Action Plan, for the 2014-2016 triennium, aims to promote the role of women in the National Armed Forces, State Police, and Peace-Support Operations, as well as in decision-making. In particular, Italy’s National Action Plan envisages activities regarding the issue of “Women, Peace, and Security” in specific conflict-affected geographical areas.

We are also aware that security and development are intimately connected, and firmly support all initiatives that take this connection into account. In line with this approach Italy, together with Namibia, Kenya, Spain, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates and UNWomen, has recently hosted a High-Level Event on “Women, Peace and Security in the Post-2015 Development Agenda”.

Mr. Chair,

This year, the Conference on Disarmament, for the first time, dedicated an informal session to the issue of gender and disarmament under the guidance of the Dutch Presidency. We greatly welcomed this initiative, which resulted in a very fruitful exchange of views and we look forward to more similar opportunities in the specific context of the CD.

Lastly, let me underline the value we attach to partnerships in this field, specifically to the involvement of civil society. This has been instrumental in drawing attention to the relationship between gender and security and is a key actor in the elaboration and implementation of operational programmes.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.