



ITALY

Statement by H.E. Ambassador Vinicio Mati,
Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament
to the First Committee of the 71st UN General Assembly
General Debate

New York, 5 October 2016

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Mr. Chair,

Allow me to begin by congratulating you on your appointment as Chair of the 1st Committee of the 71st UN General Assembly, and to assure you of my Delegation's full support.

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

Mr. Chair,

Italy attaches great importance to disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation as essential components of our foreign policy. We firmly believe that multilateralism and international cooperation are crucial to effective and long-term results in these fields. In the past year, we have seen some positive developments, together with negative trends that are matters of deep concern.

Italy remains convinced that the universalization of existing legally binding instruments relating to weapons of mass destruction, and of the main conventional arms treaties, is a crucial objective to be pursued by the international community. Those instruments, and their universal implementation, are crucial in order to build a political and legal environment conducive to concrete progress in our domains.

The NPT is the cornerstone of the international regime for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and remains the only legal framework to attain a world without nuclear weapons. In this respect, we recognize the central role of the IAEA and its safeguards system in the nuclear non-proliferation regime. We welcome the work done by the Agency to monitor the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on the Iranian nuclear programme and the cooperative approach held by the parties involved. We encourage them to remain fully committed to the implementation of the JCPoA and of Security Council Resolution 2231.

We call upon States that have not yet done so to join the NPT as non-nuclear weapon States, without delay and without conditions. We also call on all State Parties to the Treaty to implement all its provisions as well as commitments agreed by subsequent Review Conferences, without delay and in a balanced manner.

Our outmost concern for the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons' use underpins our efforts for effective progress on nuclear disarmament. Italy is committed to creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons in accordance with the goals of the NPT, in a way that promotes international stability and is based on the principle of undiminished security for all. Relevant actions should focus on practical and effective measures as steps of a progressive approach to nuclear disarmament, in accordance with Article VI of the NPT.

Entry into force of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) remains a top priority. We welcome the Joint Ministerial Statement adopted by the "Friends of the CTBT" Ministerial meeting, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the opening for signature of the Treaty. We also welcome Security Council Resolution n. 2310

We urge all States, in particular those whose ratification is essential for entry into force of the CTBT, to sign and/or ratify it without delay and without conditions. Pending the CTBT entry into force, Italy calls upon all States, including the DPRK, to respect the moratorium on nuclear test explosions, and to refrain from any action that would undermine the objective and purpose of the Treaty.

We also attach great importance to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. Italy values the Secretary General's recent appeal for investing more resources in the international architecture dealing with biological weapons, and recognizes the need for improving capacity to prevent or respond to a biological attack. With this in mind, we look forward to the upcoming BTWC Eighth Review Conference as a valuable opportunity to strengthen this fundamental instrument. In particular, we support a stronger inter-sessional work programme, provided with the tools necessary to respond more rapidly to emerging needs and challenges.

Italy remains strongly committed to supporting the Chemical Weapons Convention and the OPCW. We fully cooperate with the Organization to fulfill inspections on our territory. We have also actively contributed, jointly with other States, to the successful removal of the remaining chemical weapons precursors in Libya, in an operation facilitated and coordinated by the OPCW, and we support OPCW's investigation activities on alleged uses of chemical weapons.

Mr. Chair,

On the other hand, we observe with grave concern continuous violations of international law regarding use of weapons of mass destruction.

Italy strongly condemns the DPRK's nuclear tests and launches using ballistic missiles technology as clear violations of relevant UN Security Council resolutions, and as a serious threat to peace, regional, and international security.

We reiterate our call on the DPRK to abandon the development of all its existing nuclear and ballistic missile programmes in a complete, verifiable, and irreversible manner. We urge the DPRK to return at an early date to the NPT and IAEA Safeguards as well as to sign and ratify the CTBT.

We strongly condemn the use of chemical weapons in Syria, as confirmed by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We support the work of the UN-OPCW Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), as well as of the Fact Finding Mission and of the Declaration Assessment Team for Syria. We urge the Syrian Arab Republic to fulfil its obligations under the CWC and the relevant Security Council resolutions. We are also deeply concerned about the allegations of manufacture and use of chemical weapons by ISIL/Da'esh, and express our commitment to working with international partners to mitigate the serious threat to international security posed by the use of chemical weapons by terrorists.

Mr. Chair,

Italy remains deeply concerned by the increasing risk of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of non-state actors, particularly in relation to terrorist acts. In this regard, we reiterate our support for the full implementation of all relevant international instruments, starting from the provisions of UN Security Council Resolution 1540. We hope that the Review of the 1540 regime that is currently underway will have a successful outcome.

More generally, we are open to discussing any initiatives aiming to strengthen the ability of the international community to prevent the use of weapons of mass destruction in terrorist acts and to combat all related activities.

Mr. Chair,

In the field of conventional weapons, we look forward to the Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons to take stock of the work conducted in the past five years, and to lay the basis for our efforts in the next intersessional cycle, particularly as relates to the issues of Improvised Explosive Devices and Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems.

Another priority of our Government is the continued implementation of the Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel landmines and of the Oslo Convention on cluster munitions. For this reason, Italy continues to devote material, technical and financial resources to the implementation of comprehensive mine action programmes, focusing on such goals as clearance and stockpile destruction, risk education, victim physical and psychological rehabilitation as well as socio-economic reintegration.

We will continue to give our positive contribution to mine action through our role as Chair of the Mine Action Support Group for the current biennium and as Co-Coordination on Victim Assistance in the framework of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

We welcome the decisions taken by the Second Conference of the States Parties of the Arms Trade Treaty, which completed the establishment of the Treaty's institutional architecture, and look forward to focusing now our efforts on the related aspects of effective implementation and universalization.

We also continue to place high importance on the full implementation of the UN Programme of Action on small arms and of the International Tracing Instrument. In this spirit, we have joined the Declaration on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons which will be delivered by France on behalf of a broad group of countries.

Mr. Chair,

On outer space, we welcome the agreement reached in COPUOS, in June 2016, on a first set of long-term sustainability guidelines, and look forward to further work on this issue. This notwithstanding, we believe that a constructive discussion among international partners on principles of responsible behavior in outer space should be a useful complement to these efforts.

Italy supports developing norms and principles of responsible State behavior in cyberspace, as well as the promotion of confidence-building measures, international cooperation,

and capacity-building to improve cyber security and decrease the risk of disputes among States in this field.

Mr. Chair,

Italy has supported from the very start the adoption of UNSC resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and has developed a National Action Plan for its implementation. We are keenly aware of the importance of including gender-based approaches in disarmament processes, as well as of ensuring equal participation of women and men in peace and security decision-making and action.

Before closing, let me reaffirm the importance that we attach to strengthening dialogue on disarmament topics with all relevant actors from civil society. We note the fundamental contribution they provide and look forward to their increased involvement in the disarmament machinery's activities.

Thank you.