



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
Thematic Discussion on Other Weapons of Mass Destruction

New York, 17 October 2016

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Mr. Chair,

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

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery poses a growing threat to international peace and security.

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

These challenges remind us of the importance of achieving universalisation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC). We call upon all States not yet Party to ratify or accede to them without delay and without conditions.

Mr. Chair,

In the run-up to the CWC Fourth Review Conference, Italy supports efforts aimed at strengthening the inspections regime and ensuring its uniform implementation across the whole membership. The rapid scientific and technological advances, including the convergence of chemistry and biology, call for an increasing level of adaptability of the Organization. We attach great importance to the OPCW's capacity and experience in responding, at short notice, to emergencies, and highly value its lessons learnt in the chemical and other domains.

As to recent developments, we are satisfied by the successful removal of all chemical weapons precursors from Libya, in an operation coordinated by the OPCW, to which Italy contributed.

That was an excellent example of international cooperation, which must be integrated with adequate assistance, such as effective training and capacity building programmes.

Notwithstanding the efforts of the International Community, chemical weapons have regrettably been used in the last years. We condemn the perpetrators of these horrific acts in the strongest terms.

We commend the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) for its work carried out in very difficult circumstances. We express deep concern for its third report's findings about the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian armed forces and urge the Syrian Arab Republic to fulfil its obligations under the CWC. The JIM's conclusions are even more alarming in consideration of the unresolved issues in Syria's initial declaration on its chemical weapons programme.

We also are deeply concerned about the conclusions confirming the use of chemical weapons by Da'esh, and express our commitment to working with our partners to mitigate the serious threat posed by the terrorist use of these weapons.

Mr. Chair,

Italy attaches high priority to the full implementation of the BTWC. This year's Review Conference will give us the opportunity to strengthen this fundamental instrument. We believe that the relevant Preparatory Committee meetings were very promising in this regard, and we will strive to translate them into tangible results.

In particular, we support an incisive intersessional work programme, to allow for a more rapid and effective response to emerging threats, as well as strengthening the mechanism to review science and technology developments.

Furthermore, Italy remains deeply concerned by the increasing involvement of Non-State actors in regional crisis and conflicts, and their possible access to weapons of mass destruction.

While we are open to discussing any initiative aimed at strengthening the ability of the international community to prevent the use of WMD in terrorist acts, we consider the UN Security Council Resolution 1540 a crucial pillar of the global non-proliferation architecture.

We commend the Spanish Chair of the 1540 Committee for his efforts for a successful outcome of the Comprehensive Review of this instrument. In order to enhance its tangible impact, we believe it essential to multiply capacity building initiatives in those States that lack the necessary means.

Thank you, Mr Chair.