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**Arms Trade Treaty
Second Conference of the States Parties
Geneva, 22-26 August 2016**

**General Debate
Statement by H.E. Ambassador Vinicio Mati,
Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament**

Mr. President,

At the outset, allow me to express Italy's profound gratitude to Switzerland for hosting this Conference. My sincere appreciation also goes to you, Mr. President, the Bureau, and the ATT Secretariat for the tremendous work and dedication put into organizing this event.

I am honored to be addressing you today on the important occasion of the Second Conference of the States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Italy is proud to have been a strong supporter of the Treaty since the first stages of its negotiation.

ITALY ALIGNS ITSELF WITH THE STATEMENT DELIVERED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

In a world where the timing of diplomacy does not necessarily keep abreast with the most urgent needs of the human condition, we regard the swift entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty as an undisputed success story. However, our work has only just begun.

With the first Conference of the States Parties mainly devoted to laying down the foundations of the ATT machinery, designing its architecture, and defining its rules of procedure, we firmly believe that the Second Conference, after completing the unfinished work relating to the appointment of the Permanent Head of the Secretariat and the establishment of the Voluntary Trust Fund, should focus on implementation and universalization.

Only by strengthening these two aspects, the potential of the Arms Trade Treaty will be fully exploited, thus fulfilling its major promise to eradicate the appalling suffering caused by the widespread availability of conventional weapons.

Mr. President,

The dreadful terrorists attacks that have marked the period between the First Conference of the States Parties in Cancun and the current meeting in Geneva confirms once again, if need be, that the illegal flow of conventional weapons is one of the greatest challenges facing our world today.

The effective and universal implementation of the Treaty will help meeting these challenges in many ways, together with the effective and universal implementation of the Palermo Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition, and of the other international instruments on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Implementation and universalization could be seen as the two, indissoluble sides of the same coin, defining both the internal dimension and the external projection of the transformative power of the ATT.

At the domestic level, effective ATT implementation will strengthen domestic export control systems, establishing norms and procedures aimed at ensuring compliance with higher standards of responsibility and traceability in the transfer of defense products.

At the international level, universalization will contribute to the effective and meaningful implementation of the ATT provisions and to the attainment of its objectives by closing possible legal loopholes and by reducing the gray areas in which illegal arms trafficking thrives.

With more countries putting in place the necessary legislative frameworks and implementing stricter export controls, the legitimate trade will be preserved, while the illicit business of criminal arms dealers and the weapons procurement activities of terrorists will be hindered.

Both implementation and universalization need the robust effort and determined will of the international community at all levels, from the promotion of high-level meetings, to best-practice sharing and awareness-raising campaigns.

Strongly convinced of the existing links between universalization and implementation, Italy has put forward, along with France, a food-for-thought paper to contribute to the debate on these issues, connecting them to outreach efforts and to the necessity of ensuring greater predictability to ATT Conferences.

For this reason, as we will explain in greater detail in the session dedicated to universalization, we propose the establishment, without prejudice to the Rules of Procedure, of a “troika system” aiming to make universalization efforts more sustainable over the long term, while allowing for appropriate coordination between subsequent Presidencies and advance planning.

Mr. President,

Many interesting proposals on ways to advance our work are on the table and we hope that many others will emerge during our discussions. Let us take the opportunity to make this Second Conference of the States Parties a productive one, settling the remaining pending institutional issues, focusing on substantive topics, and paving the way to the third Conference of the States Parties.

Let me conclude, Mr. President, by reaffirming that Italy is looking forward to contributing to the concerted efforts of States Parties, international organizations, NGOs and industry in keeping the ATT and its promises alive.

Thank you, Mr President