



Farewell Statement by H.E. Ambassador Lucia Fiori, Permanent
Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament
Geneva, 14th August 2008

Madame President,

I would like to express at the outset my delegation's support and satisfaction for the way you have conducted the work of the Conference on Disarmament during your tenure. I wish also to reaffirm Italy's strong commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation as one of the original member of this body.

Your efforts along with those of the other P6 members, as well as the skilful job done by the coordinators for the substantive Agenda items have brought about an interactive and constructive dialogue on the main issues of the Conference. Let me also welcome Ambassador Herman Munbarain Hernandez of Venezuela and wishing him every success in taking over the task of concluding the work of the Conference for this year. You too can count on Italy's full support in discharging your duty, mainly the adoption of the 2008 CD final report.

The depth of the deliberations held this year showed once again the varying degree of ripeness of the core issues to which CD's Member States attach priority. The debate so far has convinced us that the very viable solution to resume substantive work at the Conference is by adopting document CD/1840 of 13th March 2008. It may be true that CD/1840 is "perfectible", but it is equally true that it contains a realistic and balanced proposal and it still represents the best possible compromise for a programme of work. We have not been able to detect any particular evolution on the so called "core issues" to justify a change on the four key points of this proposal. CD/1840 is the result of several years of "negotiations on negotiations" which we have been undertaking so patiently. This year's exercise only represents the last chapter of a "distillation process" which brought us were

we stand right now: very close to start substantive negotiations in which the overwhelming majority of countries in this room are ready to engage in.

Madame President,

You and the other members of the P6 platform have our full support in your endeavours to revitalize this august body on the basis of document CD/1840.

It is not a secret that negotiating a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices (FMCT) represents Italy's top priority to be addressed at the CD. Negotiations on an FMCT are long due. We are many years late on our time schedule according to the decision consensually adopted on the occasion of the 2000 NPT Review Conference.

Further progress has been made in the Conference of Disarmament on the FMCT issue. During the coordination of the Ambassadors of Italy and Japan in 2007 and 2008 respectively, the issue of an FMCT has matured to a point in which further progress is only achievable through real negotiations. These negotiations can only be "without preconditions". This formula indicates the openness of the mandate which would put all delegations in a position to have their own concerns addressed in the course of negotiations. This includes especially the issues of stocks and verification.

The problems are out there. In this very room we have the opportunity and tools to contribute to solve those problems. An FMCT would be a fundamental building block to reinforce the current nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation architecture.

We welcome also the progress emerged during the discussion under other agenda items, namely under agenda item 3 (Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space/PAROS). We took note of the various views expressed on this topic. Some delegations call for new legally binding rules on this issue; others are focussing at

the moment on the elaboration of Transparency Confidence Building Measures/TCBM's; others again are of the view that no new legally binding rules are particularly needed for the time being. As part of the European Union, Italy is contributing to the finalization of an EU Code of Conduct on space activities, and we look forward to further discuss this issue in the time to come.

Madame President,

It has taken the CD five years of intense deliberations to elaborate document CD/1840. It is hardly believable that the Conference will be granted another five year period.

Let me conclude by expressing my gratitude to the Secretary General and all his collaborators for the outstanding work done, to the 2008 Presidents for all their efforts to revitalize the Conference: namely Ambassador Labidi of Tunisia, Ambassador Uzumcu of Turkey, Ambassador Bersheda of Ukraine, Ambassador Duncan of the United Kingdom, Ambassador Rocca of the United States, and Ambassador Hernandez of Venezuela, and to all the colleagues and delegations I had the honour and privilege to work with. Let me pay tribute also to our interpreters for their patient and skilful job which has ensured our mutual understanding. My final words are addressed to those who keep on following our deliberations from the gallery. They are a testimony of the outside world waiting for the Conference on Disarmament to live up to its task: a more secure world.