Mr. President,

At the outset let me congratulate you, on the assumption of this important responsibility. I am speaking on behalf of Ambassador Cosimo Risi who is in Rome recovering from an injury and thus could not be here, but fully supports this statement. We wish you all the best in carrying out your task and we assure you the full support of this delegation.

Mr. President,

My delegation fully aligns itself with the statement delivered last week by Ireland on behalf of the European Union.

During the 2010 session, H.E. Vincenzo Scotti, the then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, presented to this distinguished Assembly Italy’s expectations concerning disarmament and the role of the CD.

Almost three years later it is sad to say that, although some progress can be registered in the disarmament arena, this is not the case when it comes to the work of this Conference.

Nuclear disarmament is a priority for the international community and for Italy as well. We therefore welcome the success of the negotiations between the United States and the Russian Federation which led to the signing and entry into force in February 2011 of the New START Treaty. We believe it is an important message to the world towards the eventual elimination of all nuclear weapons. We also welcome the
positive outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. But both these results belong to the past. Now it is time to look ahead. We acknowledge the engagement of the P5 in carrying out the implementation of the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference and we look forward to the results of next round of consultations among the P5 that is to take place here in Geneva. We are confident that the group will engage in their consultations in a constructive spirit and that the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons will one day become a reality. Hopefully soon.

At the same time, we deeply regret that the Conference on the Middle East Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction was postponed. While we do understand the frustration caused by the postponement, we must not let such frustration cloud our judgement. Indeed, we have never been closer than now to being able to convene such a Conference. And for this we want express our support, also in the context of the EU, to the work carried out by the Facilitator Mr. Laajava. So we urge all actors to walk the extra mile and do their utmost in order to create the conditions for the Conference to be held without further delay.

Mr President,

On the multilateral arena, the role of the Conference on Disarmament is paramount and, in line with the wisdom of the UN Secretary General, we strongly believe that another year of stalemate is simply not acceptable. The Conference on Disarmament should resume its work, the sooner the better. In this framework, the adoption of a Programme of Work should be our main concern and all of us should be deeply engaged in reaching this goal. We believe that the Programme of Work contained in CD/1864 could still be viable and worth being implemented. We are nevertheless ready to explore other solutions, like the one that you are working on.

Mr. President,

The negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament of an FMCT are long overdue. We are well aware that serious matters must be tackled during the negotiations of a successful FMCT and not least among them is the issue of stockpiles. We believe that
this matter should be dealt with during negotiations rather than be a precondition for them. In that way any State would be free to raise questions it considers priority national security concerns. A valuable contribution to moving the process forward could come from General Assembly Resolution 67/53 of last December which requests the Secretary-General to establish a group of governmental experts that will make recommendations on possible aspects that could contribute to such a treaty. As for the other three main topics in our agenda, we recognise their relevance and we are ready to give our contribution to the debate.

Thank you for your attention.