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13th Informal Working Group (IWG) of the Structured Dialogue  
17-18 June 2021

ITALY – Mario Bartoli - (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy)

Mr Chair,

first of all, allow me to thank you for your leadership in keeping the IWG on its proper track, that of a forum facilitating constructive and non-divisive dialogue on security threats, also in domains that we do not deem as core deliverables of the Hamburg Mandate.

Thank you very much also for your efforts in maintaining the issue of the nexus between climate and security in the agenda of the IWG, thus inviting us to reflect on an issue that has been figuring increasingly in the agenda of other international organizations, as well as within the OSCE.

As political leaders on the world stage have been reaffirming with renewed emphasis their commitment to the global climate change agenda with the aim at mitigating the security threats posed by climate change, this group cannot refrain from answering a compelling call to provide a contribution within and to the extent of its mandate.

Referring to the guiding questions provided in the agenda, our attempt to forge a common understanding and a renewed spirit of cooperation among Participating States should move from a clear awareness that Climate change is indeed both a driver for instability and a direct threat “per se”.

When it comes to instability, it is indisputable that climate change is already having a dramatic impact on the security of certain areas of the globe, exacerbating existing political and social vulnerabilities and thus leading to destabilization, conflict, displacement and terrorism.

And the instability it causes does turn into multiple security threats whose outreach go well beyond the areas initially affected.

We should also not forget the impact that climate change has on human security, as well as the uneven cost borne by women and children in terms of their peace and security in conflict and post-conflict environments.

International cooperation on this issue - and a clear understanding of the added-value that each multilateral platform can provide – should be part of our common endeavor.

In an effort to focus on the added-value that this working group could provide, we should try and identify the implications of the climate crisis for the role of the military of the OSCE Participating States.

Climate change does affect the environment in which our military forces may find themselves operating and in the kind of assets they need in areas increasingly affected by climate change. Our military will be more and more engaged in supporting civil operations in climate-driven disaster management operations.

Our Countries are also increasingly called to address the issue of the footprint of our military in terms of green gas emissions of military activities and installations. The need for a response based upon principles of cooperative security – and in the frame of the comprehensive approach to security - would imply a stronger cooperation on possible mitigation efforts.

Indeed, the process of “military adaptation” to climate change will require a renewed commitment toward confidence-building measures and an approach driven by the principles of cooperative security.

The OSCE, given its comprehensive and cooperative approach to security, should step up its efforts in building awareness, capacity of its Participating States and confidence, alongside a an enhanced cooperation with other international and regional organizations, within the larger global climate and security dialogue.

In this endeavor, given its ample latitude, we cannot refrain from promoting the involvement of the OSCE partners for cooperation, as it is in our interest to engage and support them in addressing the security implications of climate change and the resilience of their States and societies.

Thank you