



**Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
15th Meeting of the States Parties**

*Santiago, Chile
28 November - 1 December 2016*

Victim Assistance

Statement by the Italian Delegation

Madam President,

First of all, I would like to join other delegations in expressing our appreciation for the work conducted by the Committee on Victim Assistance, and for the conclusions and recommendations it submitted to this Meeting.

Italy fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union. I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

Madam President,

For the past two decades, the international community has taken very seriously its commitment to eliminate landmines, cluster munitions and any other remnants of war, and to put an end to their long-term devastating effects on people's lives and countries' social and economic fabrics. In this framework, efforts to assist victims have been central. However, as witnessed also by your report, victim assistance remains a difficult challenge for Countries and other relevant actors. For this reason, international cooperation remains fundamental.

Madam President,

in order to maximize the impact of our joint efforts to support victims, needs assessments by relevant States and other organizations, specifically-designated resources and analyses of implementation gaps and difficulties are key. For this reason, we fully support the Committee's encouragement to States Parties to provide as much information as possible, in particular through their Article 7 submissions and in line with the provisions of actions 12 to 14 of the Maputo Action Plan. We also commend you and the other members of the Committee for the excellent initiative to develop a specific guide on VA reporting, which will be presented later today.

At the same time, we are profoundly aware that reporting may be complex and we are afraid that the "reporting fatigue" may not only hinder information-sharing efforts, but also slow down the pace of universalization of the Mine Ban Convention and other similar instruments. We believe that we should act in order to simplify victim assistance reporting methods across

relevant disarmament Conventions. In this view , we think that this MSP could consider mandating the Committee to discuss with coordinating entities or individuals on VA under other regimes - such as the CCM and Protocol V - the possibility to adopt a harmonized approach to reporting. Some elements of this approach could include similar reporting formats, synchronized deadlines and joint technical programs to assist requesting States in collecting and managing information.

Madam President,

We are convinced of the need to adopt an integrated approach to victim assistance. Such an approach aims at ensuring that, on the one hand, specific VA efforts act as a catalyst to advance disability inclusion and, on the other hand, that broader efforts conducted at the national and international levels on issues such as health, disability education, labour, social welfare, and rural development reach mine and other ERW victims amongst overall beneficiaries.

A guidance on an integrated approach to victim assistance was submitted at the 6MSP of the Oslo Convention by the Coordinators of the Working Group on Victim Assistance (VA) and the Coordinators of the Working Group on Cooperation and Assistance and will be discussed at the side event to be held during the lunch break. We are convinced that this document represents an invaluable resource for both potential recipients and donors of victim assistance. We fully support this exercise, also in our capacity of co-coordinators on VA under the Cluster Munitions Convention, a role that we assumed last September. We encourage consideration of this guidance document in the framework of the Mine Ban Convention, as well as in Protocol V of the CCW.

Mine action projects financed by Italy in the field of victim assistance are already inspired by this approach. For us the protection of mine victims' rights and security is part and parcel of a broader promotion of the rights of all vulnerable groups, in particular people with disabilities, in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. As a consequence, Italian-sponsored victim assistance projects, whether conceived as part of mine action or as part of humanitarian aid interventions, must comply with the strategy and technical guidelines on Humanitarian aid and disability outlined by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

In this regard, allow me to mention that, most recently at the World Humanitarian Summit, Italy reiterated its commitment to ensuring that its humanitarian response plans and programs reflect the different needs and capacities of women, girls, men and boys with disabilities; to supporting the development and implementation of global guidelines on disability inclusion in humanitarian action; and to developing and implementing advocacy and awareness-raising programmes to enhance the understanding of the needs of persons with disabilities by all humanitarian actors willing to strengthen their response towards persons with disabilities. These commitments obviously apply to all our humanitarian demining, and especially victim-assistance, programmes.

Madam President,

Let me add that Italian VA policy is also guided by the principle of comprehensiveness. Indeed, it is Italy's firm belief that victim assistance must be seen comprehensively, to include both the psycho-physical rehabilitation of affected people, as well as their economic reintegration and adequate social protection. This stems from the fact that assisting victims should not be seen only as a component of humanitarian action, but also as an integral part of States' development efforts. For this reason, our assistance programmes target survivors as well as their families and communities.

Madam President,

The document presented by the VA Committee identifies another challenge to VA, represented by inadequate levels of funding. Also in this respect, we share the Committee's conclusion on the importance of continuing to work in an integrated fashion across issue-areas and regimes to ensure an efficient, effective and sustainable approach to meeting our challenges.

It is our firm belief that nobody can effectively face these challenges by acting alone. There is a need to share expertise, know-how, and relations. A need to share duties and obligations, in order to fulfill a shared responsibility. Participants in today's meeting, which includes representatives from donors, affected States, and civil society, whose immense contribution to our mine action and victim assistance commitments I want to particularly acknowledge today, is a good reminder of the importance of partnerships at all levels in mine action.

It is also as a testament to our belief in partnership and cooperation that, in January 2016, we assumed the Chairmanship of the Mine Action Support Group for the current biennium. In this role, in addition to facilitating information exchange among MASG Members and observers – a long-standing practice of this forum – Italy will aim to assist building capacity and resources for countries with long-term challenges and ensure that all pillars of mine action are being adequately addressed.

Thank you.