



Permanent Mission of Italy
UN - Geneva

**Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
18th Meeting of the States Parties**

Geneva, 16-20 November 2020

Mister President,

At the outset, let me warmly congratulate you for assuming the Presidency of the 18th Meeting of the State Parties of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Let me especially commend you – with the precious support of the Implementation Support Unit and of UNODA – for having spared no effort to allow the State Parties to continue working together, even in such an unprecedented and exceptional situation. Please rest assured of my Delegation's full support and cooperation.

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

Mister President,

Last year, in Oslo, we renewed our political commitment to the Convention, reaffirming the global norm against anti-personnel mines, a norm that has saved thousands of lives. Italy welcomes the results achieved at the Review Conference, including the Oslo Action Plan, in line with our commitment for a world free of mines.

We strongly support the Convention, which represents one of the main international instruments restricting or prohibiting the use of weapons contrary to International Humanitarian Law. In this context, universalization and effective implementation of the Convention is among our priorities.

We urge all States that have not yet done so to join the APMBC without delay, or as an interim step, to comply with the norms of the Convention. We call upon all non-States Parties, in particular major possessors of anti-personnel mines, to follow a self-declared policy of non-use, which will contribute to the universalization of the Convention. In that regard we regret the announcement by the United States Government to lift restrictions on the deployment of anti-personnel landmines by US armed forces and call upon the United States to re-examine its decision.

Mister President,

Italy is deeply concerned by the increasing number of casualties, which further demonstrate the importance of promoting universal adherence to the Convention and its full implementation.

According to the 2020 Landmine Monitor, 2019 was the fifth year in a row with high numbers of recorded casualties due to the indiscriminate use of antipersonnel mines and antivehicle mines, including improvised types, as well as cluster munition remnants and other explosive remnants of war (ERW). Last year again, the vast majority of recorded landmine/ERW casualties were civilians (80%) and children accounted for 43% of all civilian casualties where the age was known.

This is a trend we need to stop. We therefore reiterate our firm condemnation of the use of anti-personnel mines by any actor, and urge all States and non-State actors to refrain from it.

The above mentioned report also underscores that new challenges and threats are emerging, such as those posed by Improvised Explosive Devices or by the continued production, use, and stockpiling of anti-personnel mines. We are convinced that there is still ground to be covered in order to cope with these challenges and reach the goal of a mine-free world.

Mister President,

We congratulate Chile and the United Kingdom on accomplishing their mine clearance obligations. Clearing contaminated land will contribute to avoiding the increase in the number of landmine victims. In this regard, compliance with art. V is key.

We understand the challenges faced by affected Countries, and stand ready to assist them in delivering on their commitments. When deadlines cannot be met, we encourage concerned States to follow the established procedure, by submitting a motivated request for obtaining an extension. Only the framework set to this end by the Convention will allow for the necessary balance between obligations and unforeseen circumstances, preserving the integrity of the Convention itself.

We commend the efforts of the Committee on art. V implementation and we look forward to the discussion of its report. Italy welcomes that, of the 33 State Parties in the process of fulfilling obligations under art. V, 28 submitted art. 7 transparency reports containing updated information on related efforts. We also welcome the extension requests submitted by 9 States Parties, as a demonstration of their engagement towards the Convention, and we urge Eritrea to cooperate with the Committee on art. V, before the deadline of 31 December 2020.

Mister President,

Italy has met its Convention obligations at the national level and continues to attach great importance to its responsibility to provide technical, material, and financial assistance to States Parties still affected by antipersonnel mines. Since the institution of the "Italian Humanitarian Mine Action Fund" by Law n. 58/2001, the Italian Cooperation has devoted more than 62 million EUR to Humanitarian Mine Action programmes, focusing on clearance, stockpile destruction, risk education and victim assistance. In 2019, a total of more than 4 million euros have been allocated to humanitarian mine action programmes. Even during the difficult current situation due to the pandemic, Italy has decided not to reduce the level of its engagement, confirming the same amount of resources also for 2020.

My delegation will further elaborate on the topics of Victim Assistance and of International Cooperation and Assistance under the related agenda items later this week.

Mister President,

Italy believes it would be useful to further explore possible synergies among the Ottawa Convention and other relevant instruments, in particular the CCM and Protocol V of the CCW. This would ensure more coherent, cost-effective and efficient implementation approaches across these instruments. Moreover, we consider useful to continue building bridges with other international fora, also beyond the disarmament sector, such as the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities and the Human Rights Council. It reaffirms the contribution of mine action to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Finally, we believe it is of the utmost importance to ensure the financial predictability and sustainability of the Convention, to avoid further cost-cutting measures and shortenings of the Meeting of States Parties. We recall that States have an obligation to pay for assessed contributions as per art. 14 of the Convention. We therefore call on all States Parties to do so in full and on time and, where applicable, to settle their arrears.

Thank you, Mister President.