



Permanent Mission of Italy
UN - Geneva

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

Victim Assistance

Geneva, 16-20 November 2020

Mister President,

Victim Assistance lies at the core of humanitarian efforts, therefore is a quintessential aspect for the implementation of the Convention on Anti-Personnel Mines. For this reason, Italy confirms its long-term commitment, devoting a significant share of its Mine Action funds to projects related to victim assistance.

Italy has been honored to Chair the Committee on Victim Assistance and we would like to take this opportunity to thank Chile, Sweden and Thailand – with the precious support of the ISU and in cooperation with the observers in the Committee – for the intense work we have conducted together, even in such difficult circumstances.

While welcoming positive developments in the States Parties fulfilment of their obligations, it is a common concern that victims continue to be recorded. This demonstrates that we face a problem that cannot be underestimated. On the contrary, it needs to be addressed through comprehensive responses, and any initiative of Victim Assistance should be sustainable and inclusive.

Mister President,

Italy welcomes the attention given to this important issue in the Oslo Action Plan, especially renewing the commitment of the State Parties to ensuring the full, equal and effective participation of mine victims in society, based on respect for human rights, gender equality and non-discrimination.

We believe that, in order to be effective, Victim Assistance efforts have to be designed and implemented consistently and integrated with humanitarian action as a whole. Assisting victims, their families and communities is an essential component of their path towards a better future, so it should be conceived with a holistic perspective and in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Protection of victims' rights and security is part and parcel of the broader promotion of the rights of all vulnerable groups, in particular persons with disabilities, in line with the CRPD. In particular, we welcome the work done this year on Action 40 of the Oslo Action Plan (which also reflects art. 11 of the CRPD), devoted to safety and protection of mine survivors in situations of risk and emergencies, including situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is a hard reminder to all of us of the importance to do more to ensure the safety and protection of the most vulnerable groups in situations of risk and emergencies.

In light of this, Italy adopts a broad integrated approach, assisting victims, their families and communities both in the short-term goals of physical rehabilitation, and in the long-term ones of psychological support, risk education, social and economic reintegration.

Mister President,

In line with our commitment, in 2019 we have increased our financial efforts, with a total amount of more than 4 million Euros specifically dedicated to humanitarian demining. Also in 2020, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, we decided to confirm the same level of resources. Further, substantial contributions have been allocated through non-mine action funding, supporting projects with broader goals that include humanitarian demining components.

I would like to shortly refer to three cases, as examples of Italy's commitment to victim assistance.

- 1) Being a highly affected country, Syria has been an important focus of our activities. A contribution of 500.000 Euros was allocated to UNMAS to support a VA program that includes risk education activities.
- 2) 750.000 Euros have been devoted this year to the ICRC-assisted project on the physical rehabilitation of mine/ERW survivors in Afghanistan, within the framework of the ICRC's "Special Mine Action Appeal". This program covers seven orthopedic centers where the ICRC, in addition to providing for the medical care of mines-victims, promotes their social reintegration by training and enrolling also persons with disabilities.
- 3) Taking into consideration the persistent need of assistance, 600.000 Euros have been donated to UNMAS for its activities in Iraq, to be added to a global amount in the previous four years of more than 2.2 million Euros devoted to clearance, risk education and capacity building.

Thank you, Mister President.