



**17th Annual Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Amended Protocol II
To the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)
Geneva, 12 November 2015**

Statement by the Delegation of Italy

Mr. President,

Allow me to congratulate you on your appointment, and to assure you of my delegation's full support.

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

Mr President,

As a State that banned anti-personnel landmines nationally even before the adoption of the Ottawa Convention, Italy is deeply aware of the negative impacts of landmines on individuals and societies, and greatly committed towards their mitigation and total elimination. We accepted to be bound by rules more stringent than those contained in Amended Protocol II; nonetheless, we are firmly convinced that this instrument is a key component of the guarantees that can be provided in accordance with International Humanitarian Law. For this reason, we continue to support the full implementation of AP II, welcome the efforts towards its universalization, and call on all non-State Parties to accede to it, including those that have ratified the original Protocol II but not its Amended text.

Italy has a solid history of assistance in mine action, for which it created a dedicated fund in 2001. Clearance of contaminated areas – which we understand broadly, to include landmines, cluster munitions, and explosive remnants of war – is central in our assistance programmes. In the past few years, we have invested more than 15m EUR for such programmes; in 2014, we supported mine clearance activities in Afghanistan, Somalia, Libya, Colombia, and the Gaza strip. In two of these – Afghanistan and Colombia – we also financed rehabilitation programmes. In the current year, an amount of over 3 million Euros is being devoted to new projects. Funds allocated up to now are supporting activities in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Colombia, Jordan, the Gaza Strip, and Sudan, while further programs are currently under consideration.

We share the deep concern of the international community at the growing use of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), which represent a threat to the security of civilians, humanitarian workers as well as peacekeeping personnel at all stages of conflict and in formally peaceful contexts. We, therefore, have greatly welcomed the work conducted in the framework of Protocol II on this issue since 2009, and remain supportive of future efforts in this regard.

We are also aware that the use of IEDs is not limited to armed conflict situations, but represents a much wider – and worrisome – phenomenon, against which we support both preventative and remedial strategies in and outside the CCW framework.

At the global level Italy co-sponsored the draft resolution on “Countering the threats posed by Improvised Explosive Devices”, promoted by Afghanistan in the First Committee of the current session of the General Assembly, which encourages States to develop national counter-IED policies and to support similar efforts regionally and internationally. We have also co-sponsored the draft resolution on “Assistance in mine action” adopted by the Fourth Committee last October, which urges all States and other relevant institutions to provide information and necessary technical, financial, and material assistance “to locate, remove, destroy and otherwise render ineffective (...) improvised explosive devices” (OP 3).

We also support continued consideration of the specific contribution that the CCW and Protocol II can provide to the question of IEDs, given that their scope of application does not cover all instances in which these weapons are typically used, nor can it address their use also by non-state actors.

We also support further possible initiatives in view of next year’s Review Conference to take stock of the achievements within Protocol II and the CCW in addressing the serious security threats posed by IEDs.

We note with that the majority of APII Parties have submitted a national report on its implementation at least once since their ratification or accession. We also note that participation in this mechanism is not consistent throughout time and across the membership. We firmly agree with the Coordinator on the operation and status of the Protocol that the reporting mechanism is not only key to transparency and confidence-building, but also to measure overall progress in implementation. We therefore call on all Parties to participate in this highly beneficial exercise.

Thank you, Mr President.
