



**The 2015 Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on
Certain Conventional Weapons
(Geneva, 12-13 November 2015)**

Statement by Ambassador Vinicio Mati
Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament

Mr. President,

At the outset, let me congratulate you on your appointment as President of this year's Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. I assure you of my delegation's full support for a productive debate.

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

The implementation and promotion of International Humanitarian Law occupies a central place on the Italian Foreign Policy agenda, and we consider the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its annexed Protocols as fundamental instruments in this regard. In line with this, Italy is a Party not only to the CCW, related amendments and Protocols – including Amended Protocol II – but also to all the disarmament Conventions aiming to mitigate the negative humanitarian and socio-economic impacts of conventional weapons, as well as to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

In our view, as a forum gathering diplomatic, legal, and military expertise, which is open to the active contribution of specialized institutions and civil society organizations, the CCW provides unique opportunities to address current and emerging issues relating to weapons development and use, as demonstrated by the discussions held this and last year on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS).

Like others, we are convinced that universal membership in the Convention and its Protocols remains a central goal. Therefore, we will continue to

support the Accelerated Plan of Action on Universalization, and greatly welcome the initiatives taken by the Presidents of the three CCW meetings, the United Nations, and other international bodies during the past year to bring us closer to the achievement of this goal. We would also like to welcome the recent accessions to the Convention, and call upon States not yet party to ratify or accede to it and its Protocols in the near future.

We are also looking forward to further progress towards the full implementation of the CCW. In this respect, we would like to stress the importance of compliance with the provisions of the Convention and its Protocols, and to encourage, in particular, the submission of the annual compliance reports.

Mr. President,

Italy continues to be deeply concerned about the humanitarian impacts of Explosive Remnants of War and explosive devices with indiscriminate effects and, for this reason, is committed to confirming its long and solid history of concrete engagement in international cooperation and assistance in this area.

Since 2001, when a Fund especially devoted to mine action in the broadest sense was created, we have allocated more than 15m to integrated mine action programmes, which include clearance activities – of mines and unexploded ordnance, including cluster munition remnants – stockpile destruction, and assistance to victims.

In 2014, we financed mine action projects in Jordan, Colombia, Libya, Afghanistan, the Gaza strip, and Somalia, for a total contribution of over 1.9m EUR. This year, our contribution has risen to about 3.5m EUR; projects are ongoing in Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Colombia, the Gaza Strip, Jordan and Sudan, while further programs are currently under consideration.

We also continue to be concerned about the growing political and humanitarian impact of the use of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), particularly on civilian populations. We, therefore, look forward to discussing this topic further, also in light of the conclusion of yesterday's meeting on AP II with a view to exploring ways to improve international cooperation in countering the threat posed by IEDs worldwide.

Mr. President,

In addition to assessing the status and implementation of the CCW and its Protocols, this Meeting has always allowed us to exchange views on possible additional or new types of weapons that are excessively injurious or have indiscriminate effects.

In this context, we welcomed the work carried out by the informal meeting of experts in 2014 and earlier this year on emerging technologies in the field of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS). In order to further enhance our common understanding of this important issue and its multiple technical, legal, ethical, and military aspects, Italy strongly supports continued discussions, building on the work of the meeting of experts held last April.

Mr. President,

Next year, the Review Conference will give us the opportunity to take stock of the work done so far in the framework of the CCW, APII, and Protocol V, and to further address the pressing issues highlighted so far. We look forward to a substantive and constructive exercise.

As a final note, I would like to underline the essential contribution of civil society to the universalization and implementation of the CCW and its Protocols. We welcome the broad participation of civil society and non-governmental organizations in the Conference, and highlight their positive impact on our work, through the provision of additional knowledge and expertise from the field. We therefore support their continued participation in the CCW process, in accordance with its rules of procedure.

Thank you Mr. President.
