



Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War additional to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects

Meeting of Experts
Geneva, 6-7 April 2016

**Statement by the Delegation of Italy
Victim Assistance**

Mr. Coordinator,

Within the broader framework of International Cooperation and Assistance for the implementation of Protocol V, assistance to victims occupies a particularly important place for Italy.

In our understanding, 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. We consider prevention another important aspect in this regard; for this reason, we also devote substantial resources to mine risk education. These elements are consistent with our belief that Mine Action generally, and victim assistance specifically, is not only part of humanitarian action, but also a fundamental component of States' development efforts.

In 2015, the Italian contribution to victim assistance included 500,000 Euros 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". Training and education, home assistance, micro-credit funds for disabled victims, and the provision of unimpeded access to infrastructure for people with disabilities are some of the activities conducted as part of this project.

A further 150,000 Euros were allocated to the Italian section of the ICBL to continue supporting a pilot project started in Jordan in 2013, which led to the creation of a prosthesis production facility for people with disabilities and mine victims.

Other projects were implemented in Bosnia, Afghanistan, Colombia, Sudan, and Somalia.

As can be deemed from these examples, Italy takes into serious consideration not only the needs of mine victims, but also the rights to protection, inclusion and integration of all vulnerable groups, in particular people with disabilities, in line with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Indeed, 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.

Mr. Coordinator,

I would like to sincerely thank you and the Co-Coordinator for the food-for-thought paper on victim assistance, which we read with great interest.

We believe that it contains very good suggestions for principles on best practice in this domain, many of which are reflected in our policies. Allow me to focus on one specific principle, to which Italy feels particularly attached: the need for cooperation and assistance to be age and gender sensitive.

The inclusion of gender perspectives in assistance programmes is one of our priorities in mine action. In general terms, this means ensuring that gender and other diversity aspects are taken into account in mine action interventions, so that affected women, girls, boys, and men can benefit from them on an equal basis. We believe that attention to these gender-based elements is fundamental in order to provide targeted support and, ultimately, guarantee the long-term stability of mine-affected communities.

We look forward to continuing our discussions on your very useful input.

Thank you, Mr Coordinator
