



**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, 13 June 2018

**Statement by Ambassador Gianfranco Incarnato  
Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament**

**Victim Assistance**

Mr. President-designate,

First of all, let me congratulate you on your appointment, and thank the distinguished panelists for their presentations.

We are very pleased to see a specific session of this Meeting of Experts on Victim Assistance. Indeed, 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.

We are also convinced of the need to adopt an integrated approach to VA, which has a two-fold meaning: on the one hand, resources devoted to victim assistance must adhere to the principle of non-discrimination, benefiting survivors, indirect victims and other persons with disabilities alike. On the other hand, it is essential that assistance to mine and other ERW victims is included in broader development, human rights, and humanitarian programs.

For Italy, the protection of mine 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. We also fully subscribe to the principles of the Charter on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action, endorsed by over 150 stakeholders, including States, UN agencies and civil society organizations.

Finally, Italy is particularly sensitive to the need for gender- and diversity-sensitive approaches to VA, which enable responses that adequately address the different needs of

different beneficiaries. For this reason, we supported the development of a set of guidelines by the Gender and Mine Action Programme (GMAP), in collaboration with Humanity and Inclusion, which aim to disseminate good practices for gender and diversity-sensitive victim assistance among stakeholders in the mine action and broader disability sectors. The guidelines were launched last week at a side event during the Intersessional Meeting of the Mine Ban Convention. We hope that they can usefully contribute to the discussion on VA also in the framework of Protocol V.

Mr. President,

in 2001 Italy established a Fund specifically designated to support mine action activities. Since the creation of this Fund, we have allocated almost 55 million EUR to integrated mine action programmes; countries in which we have implemented such activities include Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Palestine, Somalia, and Sudan.

Within this framework, for the past few years the Italian contribution to victim assistance has included – among other projects – financial support to a programme led by the ICRC dedicated to the physical rehabilitation and social reintegration of Afghani people with disabilities. The programme has been active in the country since 1998, operating through seven rehabilitation centres dislocated in seven cities. In 2016 and 2017 Italy devoted 500,000 Euros per year to this ICRC-led initiative. Even though we are still finalizing the national process on funding allocations for mine action activities for 2018, it is our intention to continue contributing to this project at the same level as last year.

In 2017, we supported VA activities implemented in Somalia by the ICRC Moveability Foundation, and in Congo by the ICRC, through two grants of 150.000 and 250.000 euros respectively. We are considering to provide support to these programs also in the current year.

Finally, let me point out that Italy fulfills its VA obligations not only through resources specifically devoted to humanitarian demining, but also also through non-mine action funding. For example, last year we allocated 3 Million Euro over 3 years to the “Program for Humanitarian Impact Investment”, implemented with the International Committee of the Red Cross, other donors and private sector partners. The programme foresees the construction of 3 rehabilitation centers for persons with disabilities, including mine and other ERW victims, in Mali, Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Thank you.