



**The 2018 Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain
Conventional Weapons
(Geneva, 21-23 November 2018)**

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

General exchange of views

Mr. President,

At the outset, let me join previous delegations in congratulating you on your appointment, and in assuring you of Italy's full support for a productive meeting.

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

Mr. President,

The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its annexed Protocols are fundamental instruments for creating and promoting International Humanitarian Law.

Italy has always believed that the unique composition of the CCW, combining diplomatic, legal and military expertise, and its openness to the active contribution of specialized institutions and civil society organizations, make it the appropriate forum to address current and emerging issues relating to weapons development and use.

Universal membership in the Convention and its Protocols is a key goal that should continue to be strongly supported and we call on States not yet party to ratify or accede to the Convention and its Protocols as soon as possible.

Mr. President,

We welcome the intersessional work conducted so far in the framework of the CCW, which allowed in-depth exchanges on several issues of concern. We also welcome the informal meetings on the issues of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas (EWIPA Talks 2018) and Mines other than anti-personnel mines (MOTAPM), that allowed us to deepen our understanding of both topics.

Italy shares the deep concern of the international community on the extremely serious humanitarian impact of explosive weapons in populated areas, which entail both direct damage and long-term effects. We deem of key importance to reaffirm that the rules and principles of International Humanitarian Law must be complied with in all circumstances, starting with the

principle of humanity and the rules of distinction, proportionality, precaution and military necessity. Since the relevance of population-centric warfare has increased in the past few years and is likely to become even greater in the foreseeable future, it is necessary for States and their armed forces to adapt their policies, doctrines and military tactics to the challenges posed by conducting military operations in populated areas, so to properly take into account civilians vulnerabilities.

In our view, it is necessary to shed further light on the national approaches to MOTAPM use and to modalities to prevent and reduce their possible humanitarian and development impacts. We believe that, first of all, MOTAPM use should be restricted and aimed at specific goals relating to reducing the mobility of adverse parties' heavy military vehicles and of hindering enemy logistical movements. In addition, such use must be subject to the precautions contained in Amended Protocol II and its Technical Annex. Such precautionary measures are integrated into the Italian Forces' practice, and are meant to decrease the possible harm to civilians, to facilitate clearance activities at the end of hostilities and to revert decontaminated territories to their social and economic use.

We believe EWIPA and MOTAPM are two important issues meriting further discussion, and that they should remain on the agenda of the CCW.

Italy reiterates its concern on the growing use and impact of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), which pose serious threats to civilians, humanitarian workers and peacekeeping personnel in conflict afflicted and post-conflict areas. Both preventative and remedial strategies must be pursued to counter such a threat, at national and international levels, within and outside the CCW framework. We therefore welcome ongoing work within APII on the issue.

Mr. President,

Italy is satisfied at the in-depth work carried out this year by the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems and at its substantive outcome. We share the principles, on which the Group identified strong convergence, that International Humanitarian Law must apply to all weapons systems, including LAWS, and that any existing or future weapon system must be subject to human control, particularly in relation to the ultimate decision to use lethal force. We support the renewal of the GGE mandate for 2019, which will provide the opportunity to further discuss aspects relating to the characteristics and implications of LAWS, with a view to paving the way towards a consensual Political Declaration.

Mr. President,

During the last Annual Meetings of Protocol V and Amended Protocol II, we had a chance to highlight our long-lasting engagement in international cooperation and assistance in mine action and to illustrate our integrated and comprehensive approach in carrying out these activities. I will just reiterate that, since 2001, Italy has devoted close to 55m EUR to Mine Action programmes, focusing on clearance, stockpile destruction, risk education, and victim assistance. In 2017, recipients have included Afghanistan, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Gaza, Libya, Somalia and Sudan, for an overall amount of more than 3 million euros. For 2018, we have allocated a total of 3,7 million euros to mine action programmes.

Finally, Mr. President, I would like to thank you for your extensive efforts to address the financial situation of the Convention and its Protocols. We are deeply concerned by the current state of affairs, which has had serious impacts on the activities of the Convention and led to the de facto dismantling of the Implementation Support Unit. We support the full implementation of the financial measures adopted last year, and call on all States Parties to abide by their financial obligations in full and on time. We also welcome your proposals to ensure, in the meantime, adequate financial liquidity to the CCW, and are ready to continue engaging with all States Parties to identify long-term solutions, able to put the Convention on a firm financial footing and to endow it with adequate implementation support.
