



**First Review Conference
Of the Convention on Cluster Munitions
(Dubrovnik, 7-11 September 2015)
High Level Segment – General exchange of views
Statement by Italy**

Mr. President,

Excellencies, Distinguished Representatives and Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

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

At the outset, let me express my gratitude to the Government of Croatia for presiding and hosting the First Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

My best wishes go to you, Mr. Prime Minister, for the successful fulfillment of your Chairmanship of this important meeting. In extending the congratulations of my Government, I would like to assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

I would also like to thank Costa Rica, as the Presidency of the 5th Meeting of State Parties for the effective and inclusive way it has guided us through the preparatory process, with the precious assistance of the interim Implementation Support Unit, up to this landmark event for the life of the Convention.

Mr President,

Having been present at the creation, that is, at the adoption of the Convention at the Diplomatic Conference in Dublin, seven years ago, it is with particular pride and emotion that I take the floor at its First Review Conference. The Convention is an important milestone on the way to a more secure and peaceful world. With its overarching goal of putting an end to the suffering and casualties caused by cluster munitions, the Convention has written a new, fundamental chapter of International Humanitarian Law.

During its short lifespan the Convention has achieved substantial progress. From many points of view, we are on the right track. However, a lot is still to be done and other

serious challenges remain. In this perspective, the Review Conference is the occasion for us not only to take stock of the progress achieved so far, but also to take up with a renewed impulse the existing challenges towards the full implementation of the Convention and the fulfillment of its ultimate goal: a world free of cluster munitions, without any new victims, and where sustainable care and support to their re-integration in the society is provided for those who have been injured.

Therefore, Italy welcomes the Croatia Progress Report, the Dubrovnik Declaration - Spectemur Agendo - the Dubrovnik Action Plan and looks forward to their adoption. These highly valuable documents will provide guidance for our actions during the next review cycle.

Mr. President,

Fully sharing the guiding principles of the Convention, Italy has supported the negotiating process from the start and is engaged in fulfilling its national obligations.

First of all, as far as stockpile destruction is concerned, I am glad to announce that a few days ago the destruction of the remaining 210 M 26 Rockets MLRS has been completed. The related M77 Explosive Sub-Munitions will be disposed of by the end of October. Therefore, it is with satisfaction that I can say that our stockpile destruction process will be completed five years ahead of the deadline established by Art.3.

Furthermore, Italy attaches great importance to its responsibility - enshrined in Article 6 - to provide technical, material and financial assistance to States Parties affected by cluster munition, aimed at the implementation of the obligations of the Convention.

Accordingly, we have been supporting mine action in a concrete way, especially in the field of clearance of mines and unexploded ordnance, including cluster munitions remnants, stockpile destruction and assistance to victims. Since the entry into force of the Convention, Italy has devoted 15 million Euros to mine action programmes. The assistance provided in 2014 included support for activities in Afghanistan, Somalia, Libya, and the Gaza Strip. In the current year, an amount of over 3 million Euros is being devoted to new projects. A key priority of our mine action programmes is the protection of vulnerable groups, such as women, children, elderly people and people with disabilities, in conflict and emergency situations.

I would also like to highlight the extensive clearance of explosive remnants of war conducted by the Italian Armed Forces operating abroad, notably in Afghanistan and Lebanon. In our view, mine action is more than a purely humanitarian concern, although humanitarian considerations remain as relevant as ever. It has rather become part of states' development efforts. Hence, the need to address the issue of granting to the victims of cluster munitions the full realization of their political rights, as well as their economic inclusion and adequate social protection measures. In this regard, Italy wishes to emphasize in particular the importance of a human rights perspective in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

In this vein, let me recall the celebration of the International Day of Mine Awareness and Assistance that took place this year in Rome within the framework of an event organized by the Italian National Associations of Civilian Victims of War which focused on a Risk Awareness and Education Project on Explosive Remnants of War for UNRWA Schools of the Gaza Strip. The civil society sensitivity for mine action in Italy as it is also the case in Croatia, derives from our national experience of a country still contaminated, after 70 years by Explosive Remnants of War.

We also highly value the development of partnerships between States and all the other actors involved in the implementation of the Convention. We welcome in particular the fundamental role that civil society has played since the very beginning of the Oslo process and is still playing in the CCM framework. In Italy there is a strong interaction between Government authorities and Civil Society and a meeting of the National Advisory Committee on Mine Action, which includes all relevant actors, first and foremost the Italian NGO's, will be held next month at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to discuss the outcome of this Conference.

Mr President,

We take note of progress made so far towards the goal of universalization.

We welcome the recent deposit by Iceland of its instrument of ratification bringing to 95 the number of States Parties. However, we regret that many States, including the major possessors and producers, are still outside the Convention.

Reports of alleged use of cluster munitions in conflict areas further add to the importance of pursuing universal adherence. In this respect we are deeply concerned at the alleged use of such weapons in Cambodia, Libya, Myanmar; South Sudan; Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine and Yemen.

Italy acknowledges with satisfaction the establishment of the new Implementation Support Unit of the Convention. We are grateful to the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining for hosting the Unit, and to the interim ISU managed by UNDP for its work in support of the implementation of the CCM. In order to show our commitment to the goal of having a fully operational ISU, we are glad to confirm that we will continue and even increase our financial support to the Unit.

Before concluding, Mr. President, allow me to express our belief that, when working for the objective of a world free of cluster munitions, we cannot but share the parallel aspiration to a world free of anti-personnel mines, as well as of any other explosive remnants of war.

Being party to both the Oslo and Ottawa Conventions, Italy pays special attention to the development of all possible synergies between them.

We are well aware of the difference in membership between the two Conventions and, indeed, the goal of universal participation in both of them remains of utmost importance for us. Nonetheless, we are convinced that we should start a process allowing

us in the medium term to consider jointly our commitments under the two Conventions, in areas such as victim assistance, international cooperation and assistance, clearance, and risk reduction, where obligations set by both Agreements are tightly interlinked.

With a view to developing these synergies, we encourage the continuation of the current procedure to hold CCM and Anti-Personnel Mine Convention meetings in the same week. In addition, we could consider the idea of having, as from now, joint meetings for the two Conventions on the issues that I have just mentioned.

Finally, I would like to stress the need of any possible synergy between the Oslo and Ottawa Conventions Implementation Support Units. The idea of pooling structures and resources between the ISUs, or to have, in a future perspective, a joint Unit, should be seriously considered, in order to achieve not only a more efficient use of limited resources, but also a more effective and comprehensive action in support of both Conventions' implementation.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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