



**First Review Conference  
Of the Convention on Cluster Munitions  
(Dubrovnik, 7-11 September 2015)  
International Cooperation and Assistance  
Statement by Italy**

Madame President,

Thank you for opening again the floor under the agenda item "International Cooperation and Assistance", in order to allow other States Parties to deliver their national statement on this issue.

As we had the occasion to highlight during the High Level Segment of this Review Conference, Italy fully shares the guiding principles of the Convention and attaches great importance to its responsibility - enshrined in Article 6 - to provide technical, material and financial assistance to States Parties affected by cluster munitions, 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, victims assistance, protection of civilians, risk education activities and socio-economic recovery. Our interventions are financed through a Fund especially devoted to mine action in the broadest sense, established in 2001, and financed - up to the current year- with a total amount of 45 million Euros. More in detail, since the entry into force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, Italy has allocated 15 million Euros to integrated mine action programmes.

The assistance provided in 2014 included support for activities in Afghanistan, Colombia, Somalia, Libya, and the Gaza Strip. In the current year, an amount of over 3 million Euros is being devoted to new projects. Funds allocated up to now are supporting activities in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Colombia, the Gaza Strip, and Sudan, while further programs are currently under consideration.

Madame President,

I would like to make a few points on the main features of the Italian cooperation and assistance activities in mine action.

First, Italy highly values partnerships at all levels as an effective way to fully implement the Convention and fulfill its goals. Mindful of the provisions of the Vientiane Action Plan, as well as of the Draft Dubrovnik Action Plan, we are convinced that partnerships need to be developed and strengthened, among States and with the UN, other international and regional organizations, the Cluster Munitions Coalition and other civil society organizations, survivors and their representative organizations. These partnerships should be regarded as an even more fundamental tool when we look at the mine action as a multifaceted set of activities, ranging from humanitarian demining to victim assistance, from advocacy efforts to risk education.

In this vein, Italy has partnered with several entities and bodies in the implementation of its integrated mine action programs, in order to allow for the participation of all relevant actors and stakeholders, thus maximizing the contribution and impact of all the available expertise and knowledge. In this regard, let me remind our long-standing cooperation with UNMAS, for clearance and demining interventions in several affected Countries; our recent collaboration with UNRWA, for risk education activities targeting vulnerable populations in the Gaza Strip; the joint work undertaken with the Organization of American States in the field of victim assistance in Colombia; our support to the Italian Section of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines to promote universalization of the Oslo and Ottawa Conventions, but also to support the provision of rehabilitation services in Jordan, as a concrete example of Italian civil society engagement in the field; our long-standing presence in Bosnia Herzegovina with the participation of NGOs, both local and international. The full involvement of civil society – also, but not only, with reference to their contribution in terms of "knowledge from the field" - is particularly relevant to us, in line with the fundamental role that civil society organizations have played since the very beginning of the Oslo process.

In the second place, I would like to underline that 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 framework, a key priority for us is the protection, inclusion and above all the integration of vulnerable groups, such as women, children, elderly people and people with disabilities. 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. Also, gender is a central theme for us. In accordance with Italian

Cooperation's Guidelines on gender, we are well aware of the importance of including a gender perspective in mine action activities. From a narrower perspective, evidence tells us that women and girls are more affected by the inhuman effects of cluster munitions, mines and ERW and their specific needs should therefore be taken into proper consideration. In a wider perspective, we have to ensure that relevant gender and ALL diversity aspects are taken into account in mine action interventions and that affected women, girls, boys and men benefit on an equal basis from mine action activities. A lot still has to be done to this aim. We have started to fully embody this wide gender perspective in our international assistance action, notably with a project carried out with UNMAS, aiming at developing a gender-balanced approach in promoting the prevention of armed violence in Libya.

The third point I would like to make is that we fully share the view, already expressed by other delegations and also by CMC, that cooperation and assistance is not only about providing funds. It also means sharing experience, knowledge, and practical know-how. In this perspective, I would like to highlight the extensive clearance of explosive remnants of war conducted by the Italian Armed Forces operating abroad, notably in Afghanistan and Lebanon.

Before concluding, let me stress once again, as we have already the occasion to highlight in our statement during the High level Political Segment, 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. These synergies are particularly evident, and relevant, when we address our obligations under the two Conventions in terms of international cooperation and support for clearance, victim assistance, and risk reduction education. With a view to build on 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.

Thank you Madame President.