



Permanent Mission of Italy
UN - New York

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Cluster 4: Conventional Weapons

Italy strongly supports all international instruments restricting or prohibiting the use of weapons contrary to International Humanitarian Law.

In this context, universalization and effective implementation of the Ottawa and Oslo Conventions are among our priorities. We welcome the results achieved last year, at the occasion of the approval of a new Action Plan by the Oslo Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, in line with our commitment for a world free of mines.

We urge all States that have not yet done so to join the Ottawa Convention without delay, or as an interim step, to comply with the norms of the Convention. We call upon all non-States Parties, in particular major possessors of anti-personnel mines, to follow a self-declared policy of non-use, which will contribute to the universalization of the Ottawa Convention. In that regard we regret the announcement by the United States Government to lift restrictions on the deployment of anti-personnel landmines by US armed forces and call upon the United States to re-examine its decision.

With the same engagement, we are looking forward to participate, next November, to the Second Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions in Lausanne, as another important milestone on the way to a more secure and peaceful world.

Italy is extremely concerned by the indiscriminate humanitarian and socio-economic impacts of anti-personnel landmines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war, especially on civilians. Having complied with all the obligations at the national level, we strongly believe in the importance of international cooperation and victim assistance are keys components of a comprehensive approach to mine action. Particularly promoting gender- and diversity- responsive assistance.

As part of our long-standing commitment, a dedicated Trust Fund for Humanitarian Demining was set up by law in 2001 and since then Italy has devoted more than 62 million Euros to Mine Action programmes, with a particular focus on clearance, stockpile destruction, risk education and assistance to victims.

Besides providing financial assistance, we engage in capacity-building, training programmes and sharing of technical demining expertise. Our assistance programmes rely on partnerships with relevant stakeholders, including the UN, other international and regional organizations, civil society, and survivor representatives. In particular, we have established a long-term and fruitful cooperation with the ICRC and the United Nations Mine Action Service.

Italy attaches particular importance to assisting survivors and their families as a fundamental component of humanitarian aid and as a key element in long-term development strategies. In order to be effective, the efforts have to be designed and implemented in a way to be consistent and integrate with humanitarian action as a whole. Assisting victims, their families and communities is an essential component of their path towards a better future, so should be conceived with a holistic perspective and in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

It is essential that victims benefitting from assistance are included in broader development, human rights, and humanitarian programs. These, in addition, need to be implemented according to the principle of non-discrimination, as well as take into account gender and diversity considerations, aiming to adequately address the different needs of different beneficiaries.

We are equally concerned by the extremely serious humanitarian impact of explosive weapons in populated areas (EWIPA). Such impacts are extensive, and include both direct damage, in the form of death and injury, and indirect and long-term effects. Italy considers that the legal framework applicable to the use of explosive weapons in populated areas is clear and that the cardinal rules and principles of International Humanitarian Law must be complied with in all circumstances. It becomes 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 this respect, we support the process led by Ireland, potentially leading to a political declaration aimed at strengthening the collective commitment on this issue.

Under this item of our agenda, we want to underline the importance of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and of its Protocols. Their universalization and full implementation remain fundamental goals. We welcome the intersessional work conducted so far in the framework of the CCW, which has allowed in-depth exchanges on several issues of concern, paving the path to the Review Conference.

In the framework of the CCW, Italy welcomes the in-depth work carried out by the Group of Governmental Experts on emerging technologies in the area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems. We especially value the endorsement by the High Contracting Parties, last year, of the eleven Guiding Principles. Italy strongly supports the view that any weapon system, existing or future, must be subject to human control, particularly in relation to the ultimate decision to use lethal force. Human control is essential to ensure compliance with fundamental IHL principles, including the protection of civilian populations. We remain convinced that it would be useful for the GGE to further explore and possibly arrive at a shared definition of the type and level of human control that would be necessary to ensure that the development and use of systems with increasing autonomous functions comply with International Humanitarian Law. We believe that further discussing this issue is crucial in order to reach consensus on the possible elements of a normative and operational framework.

We share the deep concern of the international community at the growing use and impacts 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, starting with the strengthening of appropriate regulatory frameworks.

Illicit, unregulated, or irresponsible transfers of conventional arms have pernicious humanitarian, social and economic effects. Italy is committed to the effective implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), the International Tracing Instrument, and the Palermo Protocol, which are fundamental to countering such negative impacts.

The ATT unique contribution towards a more transparent and responsible arms trade, and to countering illicit arms transfers, relies on universalization and effective implementation as two sides of the same coin. We continue to call on all States that have not ratified the Treaty to do so as early as possible and we commend the States that have joined the Treaty during the present year. At the same time, we will also continue to engage constructively in the intersessional work program of the Treaty.

Italy is also concerned by the growing illicit flows of small arms and light weapons, including in the so-called deep web, because they represent the main casualty of victims. We welcome the consensual outcomes achieved so far in this domain and we believe that applying the UN Program of Action provisions also to SALW ammunition would be beneficial. In this context, we wish to reaffirm the fundamental link between sustainable development, peace, and security, as recognized by the 2030 Agenda.

Finally, we reiterate our support for increased partnerships at all levels with civil society and industry, which play a key role in all our common efforts in disarmament and arms control.