



**Sixth Meeting of the States Parties of the
Convention on Cluster Munitions**
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Victim Assistance

Mr. President,

Let me start by thanking Australia and Chile for their work during the past year and for their report on progress in implementing the provisions of the Dubrovnik Action Plan relating to victim assistance.

I would in particular like to commend them, as well as the Coordinators on Cooperation and Assistance – Austria and Iraq – and Handicap International, for their excellent initiative to develop guidance on integrated approaches to victim assistance. We believe that the draft guidance presented to this Meeting, contained in Working Paper 2, will be an invaluable resource for both potential recipients and donors of victim assistance funding. We fully support this exercise, and encourage consideration of application of this guidance document in other Conventions with victim assistance provisions, such as Protocol V of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and the Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel landmines.

Mr. President,

Within the broader framework of Cooperation and Assistance for the implementation of the CCM, Italy attaches particular importance to victim assistance.

It is our firm belief that 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. This stems from the fact that assisting victims should not be seen only as a component of humanitarian action, but also as an integral part of States' development efforts. For this reason, our assistance programmes target survivors as well as their families and communities. In addition, we devote substantial resources to prevention activities such as mine-risk education.

For Italy, the protection of mine victims' rights and security is part and parcel of a broader promotion of the rights of all vulnerable groups, in particular people with disabilities, in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Indeed, Italian-sponsored victim assistance projects, whether conceived as part of mine action or as part of humanitarian aid interventions, must comply with the strategy and technical guidelines on Humanitarian aid and disability outlined by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Allow me to make a couple of examples to illustrate our approach to victim assistance. In 2015, the Italian contribution to victim assistance included 500,000 Euros to the ICRC-assisted project on the physical rehabilitation of mine/ERW survivors in Afghanistan, within the framework of the ICRC's "Special Mine Action Appeal". Training and education, home assistance, micro-credit funds for disabled victims, and the provision of unimpeded access to infrastructure for people with disabilities are some of the activities conducted as part of this project.

Again in 2015, Italy contributed 60'000 Euros to the Organization of American States project on "Integral Landmine Victim Assistance and Socio-economic Reinsertion in Colombia". The project funded the provision of physical and psychological rehabilitation services to landmine survivors as well as the creation of educational and professional courses facilitating victims' socio-economic reintegration. Additionally, micro-credit funds were made available to survivors and their families.

Other projects were implemented in Bosnia, Afghanistan, Colombia, Sudan, and Somalia.

Mr. President,

We are pleased to note from the Progress report on implementation of the Dubrovnik Action Plan that there have been good and important developments in the field of victim assistance. But much more needs to be done. I can assure you that Italy will do its utmost to contribute to further developments in the forthcoming months.

Thank you, Mr. President