



**Sixth Meeting of the States Parties of the
Convention on Cluster Munitions**
Geneva, 5-7 September 2016

Statement by Dr. Palma D'Ambrosio
Deputy Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament

Cooperation and Assistance

Thank you Madam President.

Let me start by thanking Austria and Iraq for their extensive work during the past year and for their report on international cooperation and assistance activities following up on the Dubrovnik Action Plan.

Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union. I would like to add a few remarks in my national capacity.

Madam President,

Italy considers international cooperation and assistance fundamental for the effective implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Therefore, we welcome efforts at all levels in this regard, undertaken by States, international organizations and civil society. We attach great importance to our own relevant obligations, as enshrined in art. 6 of the Convention.

Italy has adopted a comprehensive approach to mine action. First, the assistance we provide in the framework of the CCM is enabled by Law 58/2001, which also establishes the allocation of funds for activities relating to anti-personnel landmines and explosive remnants of war. The Law instituted a dedicated Trust Fund for Humanitarian Demining that, since its creation, has devoted close to 50m EUR to Mine Action programmes, with a particular focus on clearance, stockpile destruction, and assistance to victims. Recipients have included Afghanistan, Bosnia, Colombia, Gaza, Iraq, Jordan, Syria, and Somalia.

Second, we believe that international assistance should not be limited to financial support, but also, to the extent possible, to the sharing of experience, knowledge, and practical know-how. On this point, let me recall the involvement of the Italian Armed Forces operating abroad in extensive clearance of explosive remnants of war, including cluster munitions, for example in Afghanistan and Lebanon. At the side event hosted by France on Monday, we briefly presented the Italian experience with the destruction of national cluster munitions stockpiles, which was concluded

almost five years in advance of the official deadline. We highlighted some of the lessons we learned during this process, and will be pleased to discuss these with other States Parties, Signatories or States not party to the Convention, as appropriate.

Third, we place great importance on partnerships at all levels as an effective way to fully implement the Convention and fulfill its goals. We are convinced that such partnerships must 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.

Italy has partnered with several institutions in the implementation of its integrated mine action programmes, including UNMAS, the GICHD, the ICRC, and the Italian Section of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines. This has enabled the participation of all relevant actors and stakeholders, maximizing the contribution and impact of all the available expertise and knowledge.

Finally, we strongly believe that humanitarian demining and the assistance we provided also in the framework of the CCM should not only be seen as tools for the protection of individuals' and communities' safety and security, but also as necessary steps towards sustainable development. It is also for this reason that we invest both in short-term goals, such as clearance and stockpile destruction, and in the long-term ones of victims assistance, social and economic re-integration, family and community credit programmes, as we had the opportunity to explain in greater detail in our statement on victims assistance.

In conclusion, Madam President, let me briefly touch on the question of cooperation across regimes, which was mentioned yesterday by the distinguished delegation of France. At the operational level, domestic and international, the benefits of exploiting synergies across conventions are clear, particularly in relation to Conventions with partially overlapping commitments – such as the Convention on anti-personnel landmines and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Such synergies can be built in such a way that they do not entail additional financial burdens to respective memberships and do not oblige States Parties to the implementation of obligations they have not signed on to.

We, therefore, look forward to the consultations that the Presidencies of both treaties were mandated to conduct on the issue. We would also welcome, as appropriate, informal discussions that involve not only the respective memberships of the Conventions, but also the international and civil society agencies that are most closely involved in humanitarian demining processes and activities.

Thank you, Madam President.