



**First Preparatory Meeting of the Review Conference the Convention on
Cluster Munitions
(Geneva, 5 February 2015)
Statement by Italy**

Madam President,

let me, also in my national capacity, congratulate you on your chairmanship of this important meeting and assure you of my delegation's support. Furthermore, I would like to join other speakers in congratulating Croatia, an EU Member State, on its designation as President of the 1st Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which will take place in Dubrovnik in September this year.

Italy fully aligns itself to the statement of the European Union. I will add some remarks.

Italy is grateful to Costa Rica and Croatia for organizing the 1st Preparatory Meeting of the Review Conference, which will give us the opportunity to take stock of the progress achieved so far, as well as to review the remaining challenges in order to develop the Dubrovnik Action Plan and the post-Review Conference machinery. We are confident that this meeting will positively contribute to the review process.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions 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 promotes not only international disarmament, but also International Humanitarian Law. Moreover, since such weapons pose a serious threat also in post-conflict situations by leaving remnants, including submunitions that fail to explode upon impact, the Convention is instrumental to protection of human rights and the promotion of development.

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. In this respect, it is with satisfaction that I can say that our stockpile destruction process is further advancing and is well on track for completion by 2015.

Madam President,

under the guidance of the 2010 Vientiane Action Plan, significant progress has been made towards the achievement of the main objectives of the Convention. In this context, we highly value the contribution 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 is playing.

Looking ahead, we believe that high priority should continue to be given to the universalization of the Convention. While acknowledging the growth of the number of States parties and signatories, we regret that many States, including the major possessors and producers, are still outside the Convention. Reports of alleged use of cluster weapons in areas of conflict further add to the importance of pursuing universal adherence. In this respect, we are deeply concerned about the alleged use of such weapons against civilians in South Sudan, Syria and Ukraine. We must therefore spare no effort in achieving such goal.

The other pillar we must build on is the international cooperation and assistance, as a means to promote and facilitate the implementation of the Convention. Italy remains committed to 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. In this spirit, over the last few years Italy has devoted around 14 million of Euros to mine action programs. The assistance provided in 2014 included support to activities in Afghanistan, Somalia, Libya and in the Gaza Strip.

I also add that, in the field of humanitarian aid, a key priority of the Italian action is the protection of vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities, in conflict and emergency situations.

Italy finally appreciates the steps undertaken under the Presidencies of Zambia and Costa Rica to ensure that the new Implementation Support Unit of the Convention will be fully operational by the Review Conference. For its part, Italy has decided to provide a first contribution to the activities of the future ISU. We also note the progress made in the recruitment of the Director of the Unit. In this regard, we would like to stress the importance that the selection of the Director and of the other staff of the ISU is made on a merit basis, choosing candidates endowed with an in-depth competence in the field. We finally thank, once again, the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining for hosting the Unit, and to the

interim ISU managed by the UNDP for its work in support of the implementation of the Convention.

Madam President,

A number of issues have to be dealt with during this preparatory meeting in order to ensure an effective review process of the CCM. Let me assure you that the Italian delegation will do its part to support you and contribute to a positive outcome of this meeting, that paves the way to a successful Review Conference in Dubrovnik.

Thank you very much, Madam President.