



**First International Pledging Conference for the Implementation of the
Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention**
Geneva, 2 March 2016

Statement by Dr. Palma D'Ambrosio
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Madam President,

First of all, let me start by congratulating Chile again on assuming the Presidency of the Anti-Personnel Landmine Convention. I would also like to join previous speakers in thanking Amb. Cormbrugge for his able chairmanship last year, which led us to a more stable and sustainable operating environment for the APMBC Implementation Support Unit.

We have come a very long way from the day in which the Ottawa Convention was born. 162 States have accepted to be bound by this historic agreement; 157 have wholly destroyed their landmine stockpiles; and 29 States have fulfilled their clearance obligations – just to state a few of the areas in which significant progress has been made.

But our work is not yet done. As new challenges emerge – such as those posed by Improvised Explosive Devices – “old” ones need to be finalized, and we all took a pledge, in Maputo, to complete the “last stretch” by 2025.

We need to renew our commitment for this ambitious goal to be accomplished, and we need to ensure that international assistance, including financial resources, continue to flow for this to happen. Italy is ready to take on this commitment in full.

Madam President,

Italy is not directly affected by the plight of anti-personnel landmines, but is keenly aware of their devastating impacts on the daily lives of many people and communities around the world. Because of the concern with these impacts, at the domestic level we banned landmines years before the Mine Ban Treaty was adopted.

We also established a Fund specifically designated to support mine action activities that, for us, are understood in the broadest sense, from clearance of contaminated areas and stockpiles destruction, to providing assistance to victims for their physical rehabilitation and social-economic reintegration, as well as raising awareness of the risks associated with landmines.

Since 2001, when this Fund was created, we have allocated more than 45m EUR to integrated mine action programmes; countries in which we have implemented such activities include Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Colombia, Jordan, the Gaza Strip, Lebanon, Somalia and Sudan.

As of January 2016, the new Italian Agency for Development Cooperation has become operational within our Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the main responsibility to implement Mine Action project. Its creation has come with a substantial increase of the Italian ODA (Official Development Aid) and a simplification of financial procedures for their allocation.

Italy has also been a long-standing supporter of the Implementation Support Unit of the APMBC, whose role has been central in assisting States Parties with implementing the Convention's provisions, providing technical advice, building capacity, and promoting universalization.

Italy, which has financially supported the ISU since its inception, will continue to do so in 2016, with an amount at least equal to that of 2015, as well as funding international assistance projects. Having assumed the Chairmanship of the Mine Action Support Group last January, in addition, we will give our contribution to fostering donor coordination and information exchange.

Madam President,

Please allow me to conclude with a brief mention of the question of synergies between compatible instruments, starting with the Ottawa and Oslo Conventions. Italy has worked on a non-paper outlining options for synergies between these two Conventions, which go from a minimal option of thematic cooperation, to a more ambitious one involving the integration of implementation support structures.

As we had the occasion to state during the 2015 Meeting of the States Parties of the APMBC, there are clear benefits to joining forces across Treaties in the context of programming and operational levels in the field and of national implementing policies, particularly in those areas in which the relevant APBMC and CCM commitments significantly overlap, such as clearance, risk reduction education, and victim assistance.

We are convinced that cooperation on such areas at the overarching level of the Conventions' intersessional work could be very beneficial and contribute to making implementation of both more effective and efficient. We look forward to the possibility to share our ideas in greater detail and to engage in a productive discussion with any interested State Party.

Thank you, Madam President