



Permanent Mission of Italy
UN - Geneva

Convention on Cluster Munition Tenth Meeting of the States Parties

Agenda item 8: General exchange of views

**delivered by Mr. Tancredi Francese,
Deputy Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament**

Geneva, 30 August 2022

Mister President,

At the outset, let me warmly congratulate you for assuming the responsibility to Preside over the Tenth Meeting of the States Parties of the Convention and express our gratitude to you, your team, the Coordination Committee, the Secretariat and the ISU for all the preparatory work.

Italy aligns itself with the statement of the European Union. Let me add some remarks in my national capacity.

Mister President,

Last year, we renewed our political commitment to the Convention. Italy welcomes the results achieved at the Review Conference, including the Lausanne Action Plan, in line with our commitment for a world free of cluster munitions, without any new victims, and where sustainable care and support to their re-integration in the society is provided for those who have been injured.

The CCM 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 has written a fundamental chapter of International Humanitarian Law. In this context, universalization and effective implementation of the Convention are among our main priorities.

Italy regrets that many States, including the major possessors and producers, are still outside the Convention. We urge all States not yet Parties to join the CCM and so to give their concrete contribution to build a safer world.

Mister President,

Italy is deeply concerned by the devastating number of cluster munition attacks during Russia's invasion of Ukraine, this year. We strongly condemn the unprovoked aggression decided by the Russian leadership, a blatant and outrageous violation of the most basic principles of international law and of fundamental humanitarian rules and principles.

According to the Cluster Munition Monitor, Russia has used cluster munitions extensively since invading Ukraine on 24 February 2022. Preliminary data indicates at least 689 casualties reported during cluster munition attacks in Ukraine for the first half of 2022, and many casualties may have gone unrecorded.

Civilians continue to represent the vast majority of victims, with a significant impact also on children. This is a trend we need to stop. We therefore reiterate our firm condemnation of the use of cluster munitions by any actor, and urge all States and non-State actors to refrain from it.

Mister President,

Fully sharing the guiding principles of the CCM, since the beginning of negotiating process Italy has supported the Convention and is engaged in fulfilling its national obligations. Having met our Convention obligations at the national level, we continue to attach great importance to our responsibility to provide technical, material, and financial assistance to States Parties still affected by remnants of cluster munition.

Since the institution of the "Italian Humanitarian Mine Action Fund" in 2001, the Italian Cooperation has devoted more than 70 million EUR to Humanitarian Mine Action programmes, focusing on clearance, stockpile destruction, risk education and victim assistance.

In 2021, a total of roughly 8.5 million euros have been allocated to humanitarian mine action programmes. Even during the difficult current situation, Italy has decided not to reduce the level of its engagement, confirming the same amount of resources also for 2022.

I would also like to highlight the extensive clearance of explosive remnants of war conducted by the Italian Armed Forces operating abroad. In our view, mine action is more than a purely humanitarian concern, although humanitarian considerations remain as relevant as ever. It has rather become part of States' development efforts.

We also highly value the development 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 has played since the very beginning of the Oslo process and is still playing in the CCM framework. In Italy there is a strong interaction between Government authorities and Civil Society and the latest meeting of the National Advisory Committee on Mine Action, which includes all relevant actors – first and foremost the Italian NGOs – was held in July at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Last but not least, let me reaffirm that Italy values the importance of gender and diversity mainstreaming in the work of the CCM. In this vein, we support the establishment of gender focal points.

Mister President,

Before concluding, Mr. President, allow me to express our belief that, working for the objective of a world free of cluster munitions, we cannot but share the parallel aspiration to a world free of anti-personnel mines, as well as of any other explosive remnants of war. Being party to both the Oslo and Ottawa Conventions, Italy pays special attention to the development of all possible synergies between them and with other relevant international fora.

Thank you, Mister President.