



Permanent Mission of Italy
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Convention on Cluster Munitions
Second Review Conference – First Part
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Victim Assistance

Statement by Mr. Tancredi Francese
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Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to thank the two Coordinators, Spain and Mexico, for their precious work and the interesting report they just presented. Please allow me to thank them also for the great cooperation experienced this year, during my term as Chair of the Victim Assistance Committee of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty.

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

Mr. President,

Victim Assistance lies at the core of humanitarian efforts, therefore is a quintessential aspect for the implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. For this reason, Italy confirms its long-term commitment, devoting a significant share of its Mine Action funds to related projects.

Italy welcomes the attention given to this important issue in the Draft Preproposal for the Lausanne Action Plan that you have submitted, especially renewing the commitment of the State Parties to ensuring the full, equal and effective participation of mine victims in society, based on respect for human rights, gender equality and non-discrimination.

While welcoming the positive developments in States Parties with art. 5 obligations, as just presented by the two Coordinators, it is a common concern that cluster munition victims continue to be recorded. This demonstrates that we face a problem that cannot be underestimated. On the contrary, it needs to be addressed through comprehensive responses, and any initiative of Victim Assistance should be sustainable and inclusive.

Mr. President,

In order to be effective, VA efforts have to be designed and implemented in a way to be consistent and integrate with humanitarian action as a whole. Assisting victims, their families and communities is an essential component of their path towards a better future, so should be conceived with a holistic perspective and in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

It is essential that victims benefitting from assistance are included in broader development, human rights, and humanitarian programs. These, in addition, need to be implemented according to the principle of non-discrimination, as well as take into account gender and diversity considerations, aiming to adequately address the different needs of different beneficiaries.

Italy believes in the importance of these principles, which are at the core of its Development Cooperation's policies and programs. For us, the protection of victims' rights and security is part and parcel of the broader promotion of the rights of all vulnerable groups, in particular persons with disabilities, in line with the CRPD. In light of this, Italy adopts a broad integrated approach, assisting victims, their families and communities both in the short-term goals of physical rehabilitation, and in the long-term ones of psychological support, risk education, social and economic reinsertion.

Mr. President,

In line with our commitment, in 2019 we have increased our financial efforts, with a total amount of more than 4 million Euros specifically dedicated to humanitarian demining. Also in 2020, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, we decided to confirm the same level of resources. Further, substantial contributions have been allocated through non-mine action funding, supporting projects with broader goals that include humanitarian demining components.

I would like to shortly refer to three cases, as examples of Italy's commitment to victim assistance.

1) Being a highly affected country, Syria has been an important focus of our activities. A contribution of 500.000 Euros was allocated to UNMAS to support a VA program that includes risk education activities.

2) 750.000 Euros have been devoted this year 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". This program covers seven orthopedic centers where the ICRC, in addition to providing for the medical care of mines-victims, promotes their social reintegration by training and enrolling also persons with disabilities.

3) Taking into consideration the persistent need of assistance, 600.000 Euros have been donated to UNMAS for its activities in Iraq, to be added to a global amount in the previous four years of more than 2.2 million Euros devoted to clearance, risk education and capacity building.

Thank you, Mr. President.