



**Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
16th Meeting of the States Parties
Vienna, 18-21 December 2017**

**Statement by Ambassador Vinicio Mati
Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament**

General Debate

Mr. President,

At the outset, let me express my gratitude to the Government of Austria for hosting the 16th Meeting of the State Parties of the Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention. I would also like to warmly congratulate you on your Presidency. In extending the congratulations of my Government, I would like to assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

I would also like to join other delegations in thanking the Convention Committees, the Implementation Support Unit, and civil society for their effective contribution to the preparations for this important meeting.

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

Mr. President,

This year we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Ottawa Convention. Much has been accomplished since then: 163 Countries have joined this historic agreement, lastly Sri Lanka, which we warmly welcome, earlier this month, and a significant number of States have fulfilled their clearance and stockpiles destruction obligations, thus creating a more secure living environment for people and communities around the world.

In this regard, allow me to congratulate Belarus, for completing the destruction of its landmine stockpiles, and Algeria, for destroying the last landmines it retained for training purposes.

But there is still work to be done.

As new challenges emerge – such as those posed by Improvised Explosive Devices, or by non-State actors who continue to produce, use, and stockpile anti-personnel mines - “old” ones need to be conclusively met. We are sure that the 16th MSP will be the occasion for us to renew our joint commitment to the goal of a mine-free world, fulfilling the pledge to complete the “last stretch” by 2025, which we all took in Maputo.

Italy has met its Convention obligations at the national level; at the same time, we are keenly aware of the challenges that remain to attain its full implementation at all levels. For this reason, we continue to attach great importance to our responsibility – enshrined in Article 6 – to provide technical, material and financial assistance to States Parties still affected by antipersonnel mines.

Upon ratification of the Convention, we established a Fund specifically designated to support mine action activities. Our assistance programmes target any kind of explosive remnants of war, and focus

on clearance, stockpiles destruction, and assistance to victims. Since the creation of the Fund, we have allocated close to 50m EUR to integrated mine action programmes. Only in 2017, recipients included Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Colombia, DRC, Iraq, Sudan, and Ukraine, for an overall amount of financial assistance of nearly 3.5 m EUR.

My delegation will further elaborate on the topics of International Cooperation and Assistance and of Victim Assistance under the related agenda items later this week.

Mr. President,

For those States which chose to be bound by the Convention, progress can be hard and sometimes slow, but it is possible. The Convention provides all the enabling conditions to advance in our joint struggle against mines.

Clearing contaminated land will contribute to avoiding the increase in the number of landmine victims. In this regard, compliance with article 5 is key. We understand the challenges faced by affected Countries, and we stand ready to assist them in taking up to their commitments. When deadlines cannot be met, we encourage concerned States to follow the established procedure, by submitting a motivated request for obtaining an extension. Only the framework set to this end by the Convention will allow for the necessary balance between obligations and unforeseen circumstances, preserving the integrity of the Convention itself. We look forward to the discussion on the report by the Committee on article 5.

Mr. President,

We regret that a number of Countries have not yet ratified the APMBC or acceded to it, including major possessors and producers. Universalization remains key for the success of the Convention. Reports of alleged or confirmed use of anti-personnel mines further add to the importance of pursuing universal adherence to their prohibition. We remain deeply concerned by such reports; we condemn any use of anti-personnel mines by any actor, and urge all States and non-State actors to refrain from it.

Thank you, Mr. President.