



**Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Intersessional Meeting**  
Geneva, 19-20 May 2016

Statement by Ms. Palma D'Ambrosio, Deputy-Permanent Representative  
Delegation of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament

**International Cooperation and Assistance**

Mr. Chair,

First of all, I would like to join other delegations in thanking Chile and the ISU for the effective organization of this meeting.

Seventeen years after the adoption of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, significant progress has been made towards the full implementation of its core provisions, but there is still work to be done. As new challenges emerge – such as those posed by Improvised Explosive Devices – “old” ones need to be conclusively met, 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.

Mr. Chair,

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. For this reason, we 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.

Throughout the years, we have provided extensive support not only to addressing the immediate goals of contaminated areas clearance and stockpile destruction, but also to the longer-term objectives of assisting victims, as well as of raising awareness of the risks

associated with any ERW.

Allocation of funds for 2016, whose amount will be comparable to last year's, is currently being finalized. Cooperation with long-standing partners, such as UNMAS and the ICRC, will be confirmed, as well as traditional areas and Countries of intervention.

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 projects. Its creation has come with a substantial increase of the Italian ODA (Official Development Aid) and a simplification of financial procedures for its 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.

Having assumed the Chairmanship of the Mine Action Support Group, from last January, we will also give our contribution to fostering donor coordination and information exchange.

Mr. Chair,

I would like to express our appreciation for the work conducted by yourself and the other members of the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance, and for the preliminary observations you have circulated to feed into our discussions.

We fully concur with the observation that cooperation and assistance does not only relate to financial support, but also to the sharing of expertise, technical know-how and experience. In this regard, I would like to highlight the extensive clearance of explosive remnants of war conducted by the Italian Armed Forces operating abroad, notably in Afghanistan and Lebanon.

We also agree that the mapping of needs and challenges is a necessary basis to identify implementation gaps and consequent necessary action. In this sense, we fully support initiatives that can assist States in exchanging relevant information. On this point, I would like to underline the importance of needs mapping also below this strategic level, at the stage in which assistance projects, whose funding has already been confirmed, are being translated into concrete activities. Especially concerning victim assistance projects, we encourage the involvement of local NGOs, organizations representing survivors, their families and persons with disabilities for proper needs identification and target definition.

Thank you, Mr. Chair