



Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Intersessional Meeting

Geneva, 7-8 June 2018

Statement by the Delegation of Italy

Victim Assistance

Madam Chair,

First of all, I would like to join other delegations in expressing our appreciation for the work conducted by the Committee on Victim Assistance, and for the preliminary observations you have circulated to feed into our discussions.

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

Madam Chair,

For the past two decades, the international community has taken very seriously its commitment to eliminate anti-personnel landmines, thus putting an end to their long-term devastating effects on people's lives and on countries' social and economic fabrics. The Ottawa Convention has played an essential role in this regard.

In approaching the 4th Review Conference scheduled for next year, we must celebrate our joint achievements. But we must also recognize that much still remains to be done, particularly in relation to victim assistance.

Responding completely and effectively to victims' needs is a complex task, requiring cooperation among different actors, coordination across different policy areas, and the collection of adequate information to establish victims' needs. Most of all, effective victim assistance requires long-term commitment. In this regard, Italy notes with great concern the Committee's observation that lack of adequate resources and funding remains a significant challenge for VA efforts.

In order to address these challenges more effectively, information provided by States Parties, including through art. 7 reports, is fundamental. We commend the 18 States Parties that submitted such information, and encourage the remaining relevant ones to do so as early as possible. We are also pleased with the improvement in the quality of the information submitted, as noted by the Committee. We recognize that VA reporting can be a challenge. For this reason, we support the Committee's invitation to reach out to the ISU or the Committee itself for guidance.

Madam Chair,

Victim assistance lies at the core of humanitarian emergency, but extends far beyond it. Victims' needs are complex and multifaceted, going much beyond emergency medical care, and our responses must be adapted to such complexity. In this perspective, we believe that VA programmes should be sustainable, integrated, comprehensive and inclusive. Let me briefly elaborate on these concepts.

First, VA efforts should be seen not only as a component of humanitarian action, but also as an integral part of States' development policies. When properly designed and implemented, VA policies and programs fully contribute to, and benefit from, efforts towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Second, we are convinced of the need to adopt an integrated approach to VA, which has a two-fold meaning: on the one hand, resources devoted to victim assistance must adhere to the principle of non-discrimination, benefiting survivors, indirect victims and other persons with disabilities alike. On the other hand, it is essential that assistance to mine and other ERW victims is included in broader development, human rights, and humanitarian programs.

Finally, let me underline the need for VA efforts to be gender- and diversity-sensitive, thus enabling responses that adequately address the different needs of different beneficiaries.

Based on the above, we greatly welcome the Committee's decision to focus its work on strengthening synergies with human rights and disability actors, to increase attention to gender and the SDGs and to encourage relevant States to collect and share in their reports gender-disaggregated data related to VA policies.

Madam Chair,

The principles outlined so far are at the core of the Italian Development Cooperation's policies and programmes. For Italy, the protection of mine 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. We also fully subscribe to the principles of the Charter on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action, endorsed by over 150 stakeholders, including States, UN agencies and civil society organizations.

Italy fulfills its VA obligations not only through resources specifically devoted to humanitarian demining, but also through non-mine action funding. For example, last year Italy allocated 3 Million Euro over 3 years to the "Program for Humanitarian Impact Investment", implemented with the International Committee of the Red Cross, other donors and private sector partners. The programme foresees the construction of 3 rehabilitation centers for persons with disabilities, including mine victims, in Mali, Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

More broadly, Italy's assistance programs target survivors as well as their families and communities, and focus not only on their psycho-physical rehabilitation, but also on their socio-economic reintegration. In addition, we devote substantial resources to prevention activities such as mine-risk education.

Italy is particularly sensitive to the need for gender- and diversity-sensitive approaches to VA. For this reason, we have supported the development of a set of guidelines by the Gender and Mine Action Programme (GMAP), in collaboration with Humanity and Inclusion, which aim to disseminate good practices for gender and diversity-sensitive victim assistance among stakeholders in the mine action and broader disability sectors. The guidelines will be launched at a side event which will be held today, at lunchtime, in room B. I look forward to seeing you there.

Madam Chair,

In conclusion, I would like to commend the Committee's activities geared towards strengthening synergies across Conventions Italy has consistently advocated the importance of building cooperation on thematic areas that are common across the Ottawa and Oslo conventions, as well as Protocol V of the CCW, as a way to make maximum use of scarce resources and ensure more coherent implementation approaches. We have promoted such an approach in our current capacity as Coordinators on VA in the framework of the CCM and can only support further efforts in this direction.

Thank you.