Statement by H.E. Ambassador Carlo Trezza
Head of the Italian Delegation to the Oslo Conference on Cluster Munitions
(Oslo, 22-23 February 2007)

Thank you first of all for inviting my delegation to this international meeting of
countries that are ready to explore ways to address in a determined and effective
manner the pressing humanitarian issue of cluster munitions and are prepared to
develop a new legally binding instrument. Indeed an increasing number of countries
and humanitarian organizations have recognized that the use of cluster munitions has
too often unacceptable humanitarian consequences. We agree that this is due to their
frequently indiscriminate effects and the large number of hazardous unexploded duds
left behind after a conflict is over. As a member of the European Union we are
concerned about the humanitarian impact of cluster munitions which, quoting an EU
recent declaration, “we consider as a particularly important element in the further
work of the CCW”. The EU also underlined that “the urgency in addressing the
humanitarian impact of cluster munitions has been highlighted by recent events”.
Indeed the use of cluster munitions in past conflicts so far has caused – according to
NGO calculations – as many as 11,000 victims.

Italy gives priority to working towards the kind of multilateral ban on those
cluster munitions that have an unacceptable humanitarian impact you suggested in
the letter calling for this meeting. Let me recall that during the last CCW Review
Conference the Italian delegation indicated that Protocol V on Explosive Remnants
of War of the CCW is already a tangible result of the process aiming at mitigating the
effects of explosive remnants of war, including unexploded cluster munitions. The
existing legal provisions addressing the past conflict humanitarian threat should be
now integrated with preventive legal provisions. Based on a motion adopted at that
time by the Italian Chamber of Deputies, Italy had indicated that it could accept the
establishment of an open ended CCW Group of governmental experts with the
mandate to negotiate a legally binding instrument aimed at reducing the impact of
cluster munitions on civilian populations. A subsequent parliamentary resolution established further restrictions on the use of cluster munitions by Italian Armed Forces pending the approval of an ad hoc national legislation, called for the ratification of Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War and for a decisive diplomatic action for the creation of a Protocol VI on cluster munitions to be annexed to the CCW Convention, containing a very advanced set of possible prohibitions.

Moreover, Italian Armed Forces involved in peace-keeping activities, have always been very active in clearing territories of any kind of landmines, unexploded ordnances and explosive remnants of war, including cluster munitions, in every theatre of operations they have been engaged in over the last years.

On this basis my delegation is now ready to make further steps forward and, together with other participants in this meeting, to explore ways to address this pressing humanitarian issue in a determined and effective manner. In this spirit Italy would be ready to join a possible international moratorium on the use and transfer of cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians.