



**Eighth Meeting of the States Parties of the Convention on Cluster Munitions
Geneva, 3-5 September 2018**

**Statement by Mr. Alessandro Mandanici
Deputy Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament**

International Cooperation and Assistance

Thank you, Mr. President.

Let me start by thanking Australia and Peru for their extensive work during the past year and for their report on international cooperation and assistance activities following up on the Dubrovnik Action Plan.

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

Mr. President,

Italy considers international cooperation and assistance fundamental for the effective implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. As just highlighted by the Coordinators, 12 States Parties have requested international assistance through their 2017 reports, the same as the previous year, and most of them have clearly stated that such assistance is necessary for fulfilling their obligations under articles 4, 5 and 9 of the Convention.

Therefore, we welcome efforts at all levels in this regard, undertaken by States, international organizations and civil society, and we commend that in 2017 we registered an increase, compared to 2016, in the number of State Parties that reported having provided assistance to affected States.

Italy, that attaches great importance to its art. 6 obligations, has adopted a comprehensive approach to mine action.

First, the assistance we provide in the framework of the CCM is enabled by Law, establishing the allocation of funds for activities relating to anti-personnel landmines and explosive remnants of war. The Law sets up a dedicated Trust Fund for Humanitarian Demining that, since its creation in 2001, has devoted almost 55m EUR to Mine Action programmes, with a particular focus on clearance, stockpile destruction, risk education and assistance to victims.

In 2017, recipients have included Afghanistan, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gaza, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, and Sudan for an overall amount of financial assistance of more than 3m EUR. Allocation of resources for 2018 is currently being finalized, and we are not yet in a position to provide exact figures. However, we expect that the overall amount of mine action funds for this year will be equal, or even slightly higher, than in 2017.

Italy has also been a long-standing supporter of the Implementation Support Unit of the CCM, whose role has been central in assisting States Parties with implementing the Convention's provisions and in promoting universalization. In 2018, our financial support to the ISU will continue unchanged.

Second, we believe that international assistance should not be limited to financial support, but should also include, to the extent possible, the sharing of experience, knowledge, and practical know-how. On this point, let me recall the involvement of the Italian Armed Forces operating abroad in extensive clearance of explosive remnants of war, including cluster munitions, for example in Afghanistan and Lebanon. Our Armed Forces rely on the support of a dedicated national Centre of Excellence for countering all types of explosives devices. The Centre of Excellence has also been engaged in training and capacity building activities with third countries, such as Colombia and Vietnam, for facilitating demining operations.

In 2017, in Iraq, we started a coordination process among the Italian Agency for Cooperation, our Embassy, the Italian Contingent, UNMAS and IKMAA (Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency) in order to consider the implementation of joint activities, in the field of capacity building for local partners, as well as clearance, risk awareness and return of displaced persons to their communities.

Third, we place great importance on partnerships at all levels as an effective way to fully implement the Convention and fulfil its goals. We are convinced that such partnerships must be developed and strengthened among States and with the UN, other international and regional organizations, civil society organizations, survivors and their representative organizations. Italy has partnered with several institutions in the implementation of its integrated mine action programmes, including UNMAS, the GICHD, the ICRC, and the Italian Section of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines. This has enabled the participation of all relevant actors and stakeholders, maximizing the contribution and impact of all the available expertise and knowledge.

Finally, we strongly believe that humanitarian demining should not only be seen as a tool for the protection of individuals' and communities' safety and security, but also as a necessary step towards sustainable development. In this regard, we share the conclusions of the study conducted by the GICHD, in cooperation with UNDP and with the Italian financial support, entitled "Leaving No One Behind: Mine Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", which was presented during the last Ottawa Convention intersessional meeting. We are determined to work in order to translate the results of this study into concrete initiatives, also continuing our cooperation with the GICHD.

Before concluding, Mr. President,

I would like to stress that the notions of "national ownership" and "donor coordination" are two key tenets of Italian Cooperation, including in humanitarian demining. Therefore, we greatly value initiatives such as the Country Coalition as well as the Individualized Approach, which translate into practice these two notions also in the framework of Mine Action. For this reason, we welcome the activities that have been conducted in their implementation.

Italy stands ready to contribute to all such efforts, geared towards enhancing the effectiveness of international assistance through greater coordination among all relevant stakeholders and at all levels, from multilateral to local.

Thank you, Mr. President.