

**SECOND MEETING OF STATES PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON
CLUSTER MUNITIONS**

Beirut, Lebanon, 12 September 2011.

STATEMENT BY ITALY

Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you most warmly on your election to the chair of this Second Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Allow me also to echo the speakers who have preceded me in thanking very sincerely the Government and people of Lebanon for the warm hospitality extended to us and for the excellent organisation of this meeting.

Italy fully subscribes to the statement delivered earlier by the European Union. Allow me, however to express a few remarks on a national capacity.

Mr. President,

Italy supported actively, since the very beginning, the negotiation process that led to the conclusion of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which we signed in Oslo in December 2008. We are strongly convinced that the humanitarian damage caused by the use of cluster munitions far outweighs their military usefulness. Cluster munitions-contaminated areas represent a serious hazard to people's life; they also constitute a significant hindrance to economic development. These were two further, compelling reasons that induced my country to sign the Oslo Convention and to promote its universalisation.

I am particularly honoured to announce that our ratification procedure is now nearly complete, thanks to the joint efforts of the Government, the Parliament and the civil society. In May, the Italian Parliament adopted the ratification law unanimously. In a few days, the Italian instrument of ratification will be deposited in New York. The Convention will therefore enter into force for Italy on 1 March 2012.

We are ready to fulfil all obligations prescribed by the Convention, starting from the destruction of our national stockpile. The ratification law earmarks the necessary resources for this task.

To this end, and taking into account the provisions of the Vientiane Action Plan adopted last year, the Italian authorities have devised a stockpile destruction program and have already begun destruction activities. We are ready to share information on such a plan even prior to the entry into force of the Convention for Italy.

Furthermore, the Italian ratification law of the Oslo Convention provides for severe penalties in cases of violation, including prison terms ranging from three to twelve years.

In accordance with the provisions of the Convention, we intend to retain a limited number of cluster munitions in the stocks of our Armed Forces, purely for training reasons. A similar provision contained in the Ottawa Convention proved to be indispensable in order to enhance the safety and security of our personnel and of the civilian populations in areas affected by unexploded ordnances of that kind.

Mr. President,

It often proves impossible to discriminate on the ground the effects caused by landmines, explosive remnants of war (ERW) and cluster munitions remnants. This is why at the national level we chose to integrate all the new activities associated with our participation in the Oslo Convention with those already existing and pertaining to the Ottawa Convention banning anti-personnel land mines and to Protocols II and V of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. The affinities among the different subject areas and treaties are evident.

In this way, by building on acquired experience, we make sure that streamlined and efficient administrative structures and procedures are in place, thus avoiding having to set up new ones. We are confident that in so doing our assistance will gain in effectiveness and meet the needs of cluster munitions-affected countries and, more especially, of the victims.

Despite the current financial contingency, Italy remains supportive of assistance programmes. Through our ad hoc Fund on Humanitarian Demining (established in 2001 and refinanced every year), we will continue our support to projects in mine, ERW, and cluster munitions-contaminated areas worldwide. In this framework, Italy intends to support a UNDP project on unexploded cluster munitions clearing in Lebanon this year.

Mr. President,

Allow me to share some thoughts on administrative issues related to the implementation of the CCM. We believe that the States Parties to the CCM should undertake a thorough cost-benefit analysis of the question of whether to set up an Implementation Support Unit for our Convention. There is no doubt that ISUs are useful. However, in the current financial situation we should look carefully at ways to use our scarce resources efficiently and effectively, focusing more on concrete projects than financing new administrative machineries. Our preference will be therefore to examine all possible legal solutions so that we can develop synergies

among international legal instruments having many common aspects, such as clearance and victims assistance.

In conclusion, Mr. President, let me express again my Government's satisfaction for the upcoming entry into force of the CCM for Italy. We look forward to further developing the CCM in 2012 and the years to come, as a State Party to the Convention.

Thank you Mr. President.