



Permanent Mission of Italy
UN - Geneva

**Convention on Cluster Munitions
First Preparatory Meeting of the Second Review Conference**

Geneva, 29 June 2020

**delivered by Mr. Tancredi Francese,
Deputy Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament**

Mister President,

Let me congratulate you on the assumption of your responsibility and let me commend you and your team – together with UNODA, the ISU and the Members of the Coordinating Committee – for the excellent work you have conducted so far in preparation of the Review Conference, despite the current challenging situation.

Italy aligns itself with the statement of the European Union. Let me add some remarks in my national capacity.

Mister President,

The **Convention on Cluster Munitions** is an important milestone on the way to a more secure and peaceful world. With its overarching goal of putting an end to the suffering and casualties caused by cluster munitions, the Convention promotes not only international disarmament, but also International Humanitarian Law. Moreover, since such weapons pose a serious threat also in post-conflict situations by leaving explosive remnants, including sub-munitions that fail to explode upon impact, the Convention is instrumental to the protection of human rights and the promotion of development.

Under the guidance of the Dubrovnik Action Plan of 2015 significant progress has been made towards the achievement of the main objectives of the Convention, but we do recognize that the path we have in front of us is long. We are extremely concerned by the indiscriminate humanitarian and socio-economic impacts of these weapons, especially on civilians, and we are willing to cooperate on the approval of a new Action Plan to face the remaining challenges, with the objective to finally remove the terrible impact cluster munitions have on the daily lives of many people and communities around the world.

In this complex scenario, we are glad to understand that together with a new Action Plan we will also be negotiating a Political Declaration. We stand ready to support your work in this direction, renewing the Italian engagement in cooperating and providing assistance to States affected by the presence of cluster munitions remnants and unexploded ordnances.

Mister President,

We appreciate very much the document you have submitted with elements for the Lausanne Action Plan¹, which in our view represents already an excellent basis to work on. Starting with the **overall considerations**, we agree that the LAP should provide direct and effective guidance to the Member States, with a set of “SMART²” actions associated to specific indicators, retaining the overall structure of the Dubrovnik Action Plan which follows the core provisions of the CCM.

We see merit in the proposal to have a section, at the beginning of the Action Plan, with **cross-cutting elements**. The contribution of the Convention to the SDGs should be the priority, because our efforts, in order to be effective, have to be designed and implemented consistently with humanitarian action as a whole, adopting a holistic perspective in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We believe all the elements you have individuated – such as gender and diversity, partnership, strategic planning, an effective machinery for the Convention – can be put in this perspective, not only to enunciate values and principles, but also setting specific actions where relevant.

Mister President,

Looking ahead, we believe that high priority should continue to be given to the **universalization of the Convention**. Italy regrets that many States, including the major possessors and producers, are still outside the Convention. We urge all States not yet Parties to join the CCM and so to give their concrete contribution to build a safer world.

Unfortunately, we seem still far from reaching the goal of 130 State Parties set by the Dubrovnik Action Plan. However, this is not a reason to resign ourselves, but to duplicate efforts to promote the principles of the Convention and the value to become party of it. We appreciate the work you are conducting, Mr. President, together with the support of Chile and the Philippines as universalization coordinators. We attach value to the recent launch of an informal working group in this respect and Italy confirms its willingness to give a contribution to this initiative. In particular, we think it would be important to seek synergies with other international *fora* in the humanitarian sector, to promote the importance to adhere to the Convention also outside the “disarmament machinery”. Also, we could work more on developing a CCM champions’ network and, looking at the valuable example of the APMBC, reflect about the appointment of Special Envoys.

The path you are proposing for the LAP, based on three pillars, looks very relevant and appropriate to build a strategy, possibly setting a new precise goal for the next five years’ review cycle. As for the part on compliance, although it is relevant for promoting adherence to the values of the Convention, we believe it should be better placed in the section of the Action Plan devoted to National Implementation, as an important part of the commitments every State Party has taken towards the Convention.

¹ CCM/CONF/2020/PM.1/WP.4

² Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-framed

Mister President,

Victim Assistance lies at the core of humanitarian efforts, therefore is a quintessential aspect for the implementation of the Convention. For this reason, Italy confirms its long-term commitment, devoting a significant share of its Mine Action funds to projects related to victim assistance.

Italy welcomes the attention given to this important issue in the elements for the Lausanne Action Plan that you have submitted, especially renewing the commitment of the State Parties to ensuring the full, equal and effective participation of mine victims in society, based on respect for human rights, gender equality and non-discrimination.

We believe that, in order to be effective, Victim Assistance efforts have to be designed and implemented consistently and integrated with humanitarian action as a whole. Assisting victims, their families and communities is an essential component of their path towards a better future, so it should be conceived with a holistic perspective and in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Drafting this session of the Action Plan, we should bear in mind that protection of victims' rights and security is part and parcel of the broader promotion of the rights of all vulnerable groups, in particular persons with disabilities. So we are very much supportive of the idea to underline that the actions covered by this chapter should be aligned with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the IMAS and the IASC Guidelines on inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action.

Also, having in mind the work we are conducting in the Victim Assistance Committee of the Ottawa Convention, we believe it could be useful to draft a check-list to be circulated every year between the affected States. We see it as a valuable tool for the relevant Authorities to support the implementation of the Action Plan and to report on their results and on the main challenges they experience.

Mister President,

International cooperation and assistance is a pillar we must build on as a means to promote and facilitate the implementation of the CCM. Italy remains deeply convinced of its important role and a dedicated Trust Fund for Humanitarian Demining was set up by law in 2001, allowing the allocation of resources to mine action projects relating to cluster munitions, anti-personnel landmines and explosive remnants of war. Since then, Italy has devoted more than 58 million Euros to Mine Action programmes, with a particular focus on clearance, stockpile destruction, risk education and assistance to victims.

In carrying out these activities, we strongly 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. Partnerships at all levels – with the UN, other international and regional organizations, civil society and survivors' organizations – are the most effective way to fully implement the Convention, maximizing the contribution and impact of all the available expertise and knowledge.

Looking at the proposed elements for the Action Plan, I would like to stress that the notions of “national ownership” and “donor coordination” are two key tenets. Therefore, we greatly value initiatives such as the Country Coalition, that should be reinforced in the Action Plan. We would also like to propose the adoption, between the tools to be inserted in this section of the Action Plan, of the Individualized Approach, which we believe represents a good example of assisting countries at 360 degrees.

Mister President,

We share your considerations on the importance of a fully functional **machinery** for the effective implementation of the Convention. This translates, first of all, in the responsibility of all the States Parties to meet their financial obligations in full and on time.

Italy believes the **ISU** is a fundamental part of that machinery, and its role is very important to give effective assistance to all States Parties in implementing the Convention’s provisions, building capacity, providing technical advice and promoting universalization. We are already contributing in the financing of the ISU and, even if at the national level planning and budgeting process for Mine Action Activities in 2020 is still under consideration, we can confirm that we will be able to contribute to supporting the ISU activities at the same level as in 2019.

We want to thank you for your document on some very important institutional aspects of the ISU; we need time to analyse all the implications and we look forward to participate in a discussion in this respect. In general, while understanding that a merging with the ISU of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty is not realistic, we think we could look at the latter as an inspiring model of good functioning. Also, we want to reiterate our gratitude and support to the GICHD for all the support the Centre has always assured to the ISU. As for the tenure of the ISU Director, we believe a term of four or five years, renewable once, would be the best option. Possibly aligning the contract of the Director with the review cycle of the Convention, to ensure a certain continuity and effectiveness to the work of the ISU.

Thank you, Mister President.