



Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
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Statement by Palma D'Ambrosio
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Victim Assistance

Mr. President,

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 conclusions and recommendations it submitted to this Meeting.

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

Mr. President,

For the past two decades, the international community has taken very seriously its commitment to eliminate landmines and to put 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.

On the year of the 20th anniversary since the adoption of the Convention, 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. Perhaps most of all, effective victim assistance requires long-term commitment. In this sense, Italy notes with great concern the Committee's conclusion that lack of adequate funding remains a significant challenge for States Parties' VA efforts.

In order to address these challenges more effectively, information provided by States Parties through their art. 7 reports is fundamental. We are pleased with the increase in the number of reports submitted in 2017 compared to last year, as well as with the general improvement in the quality of the information submitted. We recognize that VA reporting can be a challenge, and that this can lead to incomplete or partial reports. For this reason, we support the Committee's conclusion that reaching out to the ISU for guidance on reporting could be beneficial.

Mr. President,

Victim assistance lies at the core of humanitarian emergency, but it 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 a panel discussion we organized last June with UNMAS, we tried to explore the multi-faceted nature of victims' needs, and the implications this has in the design

and implementation of VA programmes. We reached the conclusion that VA 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. Indeed, when properly designed and implemented, VA policies and programs fully contribute to, and benefit from, the efforts put in place for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In line with this principle, 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.

Second, we are convinced of the need to adopt an integrated approach to VA, as outlined in the Guidance elaborated by Australia and Chile in their capacity as Coordinators on Victim Assistance in the CCM, with the cooperation of Handicap International, which was launched during last year's Meeting of the States Parties to the Ottawa Convention.

While encouraging all States Parties to make use of such a valuable instrument, let me just recall now that integrated has a two-fold meaning: on the one hand, resources devoted to victim assistance must adhere to the principle of non-discrimination by 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.

The action of the Italian Development Cooperation is already guided by this approach. For Italy, the protection of mine victims' rights and security is part and parcel of a broader promotion of the rights of all vulnerable groups, in particular people with disabilities, in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Consistently with this, Italy fulfills its VA obligations also through non-mine action funding. We also fully subscribe to the principles of the Charter on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action, which has been endorsed by over 150 stakeholders, including States, UN agencies and civil society organizations.

Last but not least, let me underline that even sustainable and integrated VA efforts would be impaired if we dismissed a central aspect of victim Assistance, which is the need for gender- and diversity-sensitive policies, which can be tailored to the different needs of the different beneficiaries.

Based on this conviction, Italy is supporting the development of a set of guidelines by the Gender and Mine Action Programme (GMAP), in collaboration with Handicap International, 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 are currently being finalized, and will be presented next year.

Thank you, Mr. President.