



**Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
16th Meeting of the States Parties
Vienna, 18-21 December 2017**

**Statement by Ambassador Vinicio Mati
Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament**

International Cooperation and Assistance

Madam Chair,

First of all, I would like to join other delegations in expressing our appreciation for the work conducted by the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance.

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

Madam Chair,

This year we celebrate the 20th anniversary since the adoption of the Ottawa Convention, but the legitimate sense of fulfilment deriving from the important results we have collectively achieved should not overshadow the challenges we still need to face. To overcome them, enhanced international cooperation and assistance is essential.

We therefore welcome the conclusions embodied in the Committee's report. We believe that the individualized approach, an improved platform for partnerships, a regular and systemic dialogue between your Committee and the Committees on Victim Assistance and Article 5 implementation represent valuable tools to increase the effectiveness of International Cooperation. We encourage you and the other members of the Committee to continue your efforts in the same direction and stand ready to assist you in your endeavors.

Madam Chair,

Also at the national level, we attach great importance to our responsibility – enshrined in Article 6 – to provide technical, material and financial assistance to States Parties still affected by antipersonnel mines.

For this reason, in 2011 we established a Fund specifically designated to support mine action activities. Since the creation of this Fund, we have allocated almost 50 million EUR to integrated mine action programmes. Only in 2017, recipients included Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Colombia, DRC, Iraq, Sudan, and Ukraine, for an overall amount of financial assistance of nearly 3,5m EUR.

Throughout the years, we have provided extensive support not only towards the immediate goals of clearance and stockpile destruction, but also to the longer-term objectives of assisting victims,

as well as of raising awareness of the risks associated with any ERW. In this specific context, I am glad to announce that Italy has decided to fund with 3 Million Euro for the next 3 years the “Program for Humanitarian Impact Investment”.

This program - implemented with the International Committee of the Red Cross, other donors and private partners - will allow us to build 3 new rehabilitation centers in favor of persons with disabilities, including mine-victims in 3 countries in Africa: Mali, Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

In the implementation of its integrated mine action programmes, Italy has partnered with several institutions, 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.

Italy has also been a long-standing supporter of the Implementation Support Unit of the APMBC, whose role has been central in assisting States Parties with implementing the Convention’s provisions and in promoting universalization.

We are convinced that cooperation and assistance does not only relate to financial support, but also to the sharing of expertise, technical know-how and experience. In this regard, I would like to highlight the extensive clearance of explosive remnants of war conducted by the Italian Armed Forces operating abroad, notably 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 is also engaged in training and capacity building activities with third countries, such as Colombia and Vietnam, for facilitating demining operations.

Before concluding, Madam Chair,

Let me highlight our strong belief 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 highly value the findings and 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 intersessional meeting. We look forward to seeing its recommendations translated into concrete initiatives aimed at mainstreaming the SDGs into national mine action policies and strategies.

Thank you.