



Second International Pledging Conference for the Implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

Geneva, 28 February 2017

Statement by the Delegation of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament

Mister President,

First of all, allow me to congratulate you on assuming the Presidency of the Anti-Personnel Landmine Convention this year and to welcome Vice Minister Linhart, whose presence we greatly appreciated. Let me also thank Austria for organizing this Second International Pledging Conference after the successful initiative led last year under the Chilean Presidency. Your combined efforts certainly are an inspiration for all of us and allow the APMBC Implementation Support Unit to operate in a stable and predictable environment.

This year we celebrate the 20th anniversary since the Ottawa Convention was adopted and signed. Much has been accomplished since then. However, the legitimate sense of fulfilment deriving from these important results should not overshadow the challenges we still need to face.

The number of landmine-related deaths has substantially decreased since the Ottawa Convention entered into force. However, the toll of casualties caused by victim-activated Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) has grown. More generally, according to various reports, 2015 witnessed a 75% increase in the number of mine-related casualties as compared to 2014, and the highest recorded total since 2006.

Moreover, the increasing use of anti-personnel mines by non-state entities is particularly worrisome.

To counter such threats, we need refreshed awareness and increased political determination.

Mister President,

Although Italy was not a directly landmine-affected country, it has traditionally shown great awareness and attention for the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of anti-personnel landmines use. Our efforts went from banning landmines years before the Convention was adopted, to the creation of a Fund specifically designed to give concrete support to mine action activities. These cover a wide range of programmes dealing not only with the clearance of contaminated areas and the destruction of stockpiles, but also with assistance to victims.

Since the creation of the Fund in 2001, the Italian government has allocated close to 50m EUR to integrated mine action programmes in countries such as Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Colombia, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Palestine, Somalia and Sudan.

As Chair of the Mine Action Support Group, we are also engaged with our partners in efforts aimed at making financial allocations to mine action more efficient and effective, including by enhancing coordination and information exchange among donors.

Italy intends to pursue its role of promoter of the principles and obligations enshrined in the Ottawa Convention, providing personal and material resources for its full implementation.

In this context, Italy will continue to financially support the ISU, as it has done since its establishment.

Mr. President,

The registered reduction of the financial resources allocated to mine action both domestically and internationally is in our view worrisome. 2015 was the third year in a row of declining support and this year recorded the lowest level since 2005. Italy will do its utmost to help reverting this trend.

In Istanbul - on the occasion of the World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016 - we specifically committed to further enhancing humanitarian demining activities by providing “no less than 2-2.5m Euro each year to UNMAS or ICRC or other implementing agencies”.

We intend to fulfil this obligation by allocating adequate resources for humanitarian demining also in 2017. Pending the approval of the Italian Law on Italy’s participation to peace and security initiatives, we are not yet in the position to provide exact figures, but we expect to destine to this sector the same budget of 2016.

Last year we allocated a comprehensive amount of 190.000 EUR to the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), which included a grant of 57.500 EUR specifically destined to the Ottawa Convention Implementation Support Unit. We are firmly intentioned to keep our financial contribution at the same level as last year.

Thank you, Mister President.