



Permanent Mission of Italy  
UN - Geneva

## **Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention 19th Meeting of the States Parties**

### **Victim Assistance**

*The Hague, 15-19 November 2021*

Mister President,

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

While welcoming positive developments in the States Parties fulfilment of their obligations, it is a common concern that victims continue to be recorded. This demonstrates that we face a problem that cannot be underestimated. On the contrary, it needs to be addressed through comprehensive responses, and any initiative of Victim Assistance should be sustainable and inclusive.

Mister President,

Italy welcomes the attention given to this important issue in the Oslo Action Plan, 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. Moreover, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is a hard reminder to all of us of the importance to do more to ensure the safety and protection of the most vulnerable groups in situations of risk and emergencies.

In light of this, Italy adopts a broad integrated approach, assisting victims, their families and communities both in the short-term goals of physical rehabilitation, and in the long-term ones of psychological support, risk education, social and economic reintegration.

Mister President,

In line with our commitment, in 2021 we have redoubled our financial efforts, with a total amount of more than 8 million Euros specifically dedicated to humanitarian mine action. Further, substantial contributions have been allocated through non-mine action funding, supporting projects with broader goals that include humanitarian demining components.

I would like to shortly refer to two cases, as examples of Italy's commitment to victim assistance.

1) Italy is greatly strengthening its humanitarian commitment on the Afghan crisis, in line with our international pledge last September. All of our fresh financial resources will be channeled through UN agencies or the Red Cross system. The widespread presence of explosive devices on the ground adds to a long list of challenges for the population. In order to concretely assist the most vulnerable, 794.000 Euros have been devoted this year to the ICRC-assisted project on the physical rehabilitation of mine/IED/ERW survivors in Afghanistan, within the framework of the ICRC's "Special Mine Action Appeal". This program covers seven orthopedic centers where the ICRC, in addition to providing for the medical care of mines-victims, promotes their social reintegration by training and enrolling also persons with disabilities.

2) In Mali, unexploded bombs and locally produced landmines affect millions of vulnerable people and threaten the Country's stability. That is why, this year we have contributed for the first time to the international response in Mali, where we have allocated 1 million Euros to the ICRC for victim assistance in the framework of the "Disability and Mine Action" appeal.

Mister President,

Before concluding, let me thank you and all the State Parties for the consideration of the Italian expression of interest to integrate the Committee on Victim Assistance in the next cycle. We see it as a part of our contribution to the work of the Convention and as a concrete sign of our commitment towards its implementation, and we stand ready to work with our partners to strengthen our collective effort in favor of mine survivors.

Thank you, Mister President.