



Permanent Mission of Italy
UN - Geneva

**Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
19th Meeting of the States Parties
International Cooperation and Assistance**

The Hague, 15-19 November 2021

Mister President,

Italy remains deeply convinced of the important role of international cooperation and assistance for our common work in the framework of the Convention. For Italy, this is more than a legal obligation. It is a long-standing commitment, as a part of our comprehensive approach to mine action.

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 anti-personnel landmines and explosive remnants of war. Since then, Italy has devoted more than 70 million Euros to Mine Action programmes, with a particular focus on clearance, stockpile destruction, risk education and assistance to victims.

Mister President,

We are aware of the challenges that many countries are facing because of the current pandemic. We believe this is not a reason to diminish the level of our commitment, but to find innovative solutions for funding and to promote more synergies between different instrument. In this vein, I am particularly glad to inform that Italy has doubled its budget for 2021 with respect to 2020, as a sign of renewed commitment: for 2021, a total of 8 million euros are being allocated to humanitarian mine action programmes.

During this year, Italy is continuing to support UNMAS activities in Iraq, Libya, Palestine, and Syria, relating to clearance, mine-risk education and survivor and indirect victim assistance. Our country is also contributing to ICRC activities in Afghanistan, Mali, Niger and Somalia relating to survivors' physical rehabilitation and socio-economic reintegration.

This year, thanks to the doubling of the budget devoted to mine action activities, the Italian Cooperation is also supporting the Italian NGOs active in Libya and Iraq, especially as far as risk education is concerned. We truly believe that their presence on the ground and active commitment with local communities can have an added value also in this field.

Finally, Italy is supporting the OAS in Colombia, for activities relating to psycho-social and reinsertion assistance to ERW survivors. Moreover, through the Italo-Latin American Organization (IILA) is providing technical assistance and training for demining activities in Colombia and Peru.

Mister President,

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. On this point, let me recall the involvement of the Italian Armed Forces operating abroad in clearance of improvised explosive devices and explosive ordnance disposals, and the support of a dedicated national Centre of Excellence for countering all types of explosives devices. The Centre has been engaged in training and capacity building activities with third countries and, recently this year, it has concluded a Cooperation Agreement with the GICHD to strengthen its activities and working together fostering mine action.

Our collaboration with several actors in the implementation of their integrated mine action programs also shows the Italian commitment for multilateralism. Such partnerships – at all levels, with the UN, other international and regional organizations, civil society and survivors' organizations – are an effective way to fully implement the Convention, maximizing the contribution and impact of all the available expertise and knowledge. Moreover, we wish to reaffirm the fundamental link between sustainable development, peace, and security, as recognized by the 2030 Agenda.

Before concluding, Mister President, I would like to stress that the notions of "national ownership" and "donor coordination" are two key tenets of Italian Cooperation, including in humanitarian demining. Therefore, we greatly value initiatives such as the Country Coalition as well as the Individualized Approach, which translate these two notions into practice also in the framework of Mine Action. For this reason, we welcome the activities that have been conducted in their implementation.

Italy stands ready to contribute to all such efforts, geared towards enhancing the effectiveness of international assistance through greater coordination among all relevant stakeholders and at all levels, from multilateral to local.

Thank you, Mister President.