



Permanent Mission of Italy  
UN - Geneva

## **Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention**

### **Intersessional Meetings**

#### **Victims Assistance**

**Geneva, 19 June 2023**

Mr. Chair,

As this is the first time I am taking the floor, let me congratulate the President, Amb. Thomas Goebel, for the efforts conducted to strengthen all the provisions of the Convention and the Oslo Action Plan, including the very important ones related to victims assistance. I would also like to thank Uganda as Chair of the Committee on Victims Assistance for the work carried out through this year.

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

Providing assistance to victims is more important than ever due to growing conflicts that have a direct impact on the lives of millions of people living in contaminated areas.

Mine action is at the core of the Italian humanitarian assistance and to this end a dedicated fund for humanitarian demining was established in 2001. In 2022, we have allocated roughly 8.5 million euro to initiatives in this field carried out by main international organizations - such as UNMAS, the ICRC and the GICHD - in a number of countries, such as Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Iraq, Mali, Niger, Syria, Somalia and Sudan.

As an incident can have massive consequences on a person's life, in our action we focus on victims' assistance, in order to meet the needs of the most vulnerable people in emergency contexts, such as the people with disabilities. We know that

providing this kind of assistance requires an holistic and integrated multi-sector approach, which combines physical rehabilitation, psycho-social support and socio-economic integration.

Being Italy a senior member of the Committee on Victims Assistance, allow me, Mr Chair, to provide some examples of Italy's experience as a donor in this sector.

In Ethiopia, through the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), we are providing rehabilitation assistance to prisoners, to people living in remote areas or in places where conflicts are in progress and to other vulnerable groups who have difficulty accessing essential services. We support people with disabilities progress in their socio-economic inclusion, directly or through the support of other organisations, by enabling them to obtain support for their livelihoods, access educational opportunities or participate in sportive activities. In Mali, still through the ICRC, we are supporting physical rehabilitation centres, in particular through the first physical rehabilitation center in Mopti, in the framework of the "Programme for Humanitarian Impact Investment". In Niger, we are providing funds to the ICRC for specific rehabilitation activities, for the production of tricycles, which are more suitable for the sandy terrain of these areas compared to conventional wheelchairs, and we focus greater attention to the most vulnerable people, including women, victims of violence, and migrants.

We are aware that this sector is still severely underfunded. Even though we have made progress, there are still a number of challenges. It would be important, for instance, to ensure the availability, accessibility and affordability of rehabilitation-related technologies through more open and competitive markets and by ensuring information sharing among States. From this perspective, universities and private companies in the sector could be involved.

The Italian Cooperation will continue supporting victims assistance activities and initiatives also in the future and I would like to thank you again for letting us share our experience in this field.

Thank you, Mr Chair.