



ITALY

**Statement by Ms. Palma D'Ambrosio
Deputy Permanent Representative of Italy
to the Conference on Disarmament
to the First Committee of the 71st UN General Assembly
Thematic Discussion on Conventional Weapons
New York, 21 October 2016**

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Mr. Chair,

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

Mr. Chair,

Italy strongly supports all international instruments designed to restrict or prohibit the use of weapons contrary to International Humanitarian Law.

The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its Protocols play a central role in this regard and their universalisation and full implementation remain fundamental goals to be pursued in good faith. Italy is ready to give its contribution for a successful Fifth Review Conference, an opportunity to take stock of the work conducted in the past five years and lay the basis for our efforts in the next intersessional cycle.

In particular, we look forward to the adoption of the Declaration on Improvised Explosive Devices and the establishment of a Group of Governmental Experts tasked with continuing discussions on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems.

Mr. Chair,

Continued and full implementation of the Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel landmines and of the Oslo Convention on cluster munitions is another priority for Italy, given their unique contribution to addressing the indiscriminate, humanitarian, and socio-economic impact, especially on civilians, of these weapons.

At national level, we successfully completed the destruction of our national stockpiles of both antipersonnel mines in 2002 and cluster munitions in 2015. In this regard, Italy has developed a in-depth expertise in developing demilitarization and dismantlement technologies, as well as up-to-date plants on the national territory.

At the international level, whereas much has been done to implement the 2015 Dubrovnik Action Plan and the 2014 Maputo Action Plan, challenges still remain. Mindful of the central role of cooperation and assistance in addressing them, Italy continues to allocate material, technical and financial resources to the implementation of comprehensive mine action programmes.

These programmes relate to any kind of explosive remnant of war, including landmines and cluster munitions, and focus on clearance, stockpile destruction, risk education, physical and psychological rehabilitation as well as socio-economic reintegration of the victims. Since 2001, Italy has devoted about 50m EUR to Mine Action programmes focused on clearance, stockpile destruction, and victims assistance. Recipients have included, *inter alia*, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Colombia, Gaza, Iraq, Jordan, Somalia, and the Syrian population.

Besides financial assistance, we also provide training programmes and demining technical knowledge. These activities rely on partnerships with relevant stakeholders, including the UN, other international and regional organizations, civil society, and survivor representatives. In this regard, we have established a long-term cooperation with the United Nations Mine Action Service, a key partner in our mine action programmes.

We continue to contribute to mine action through our Chairmanship of the Mine Action Support Group. As from last September, Italy also assumed the role of Coordinator, together with Chile, of the Committee on Victim Assistance of the Oslo Convention.

Mr. Chair,

During the past decades, the international community has become increasingly aware of the pernicious consequences of illicit, unregulated, or irresponsible transfers of conventional arms. Italy is committed to the effective implementation of the Arms Trade

Treaty (ATT), the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms, and the International Tracing Instrument, which play a fundamental role in countering these negative impacts.

We welcome the decisions taken by the Second Conference of the States Parties of the ATT, which has now established the institutional structure of the Treaty. Its full implementation and universalisation are still challenges that we consider crucial objectives for the next years, as well as the universalization and the effective implementation of the Palermo Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition.

We also welcome the Declaration on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons delivered by France, which we have subscribed together with a broad group of countries, as a reiteration of the international community's commitment towards countering the illicit proliferation of such weapons.

Finally, I would like to emphasize the key role of civil society in our common effort in disarmament and arms control, and reiterate our support for an increased partnership with civil society institutions – including NGOs and think tanks – at all levels.

Thank you, Mr Chair.