



Permanent Mission of Italy  
UN - Geneva

## **Convention on Cluster Munitions**

### **Eleventh Meeting of States Parties**

*11-14 September 2023*

### **General exchange of views**

#### **Statement delivered by Ambassador Leonardo Bencini Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament**

Mister President,

At the outset, let me warmly congratulate you on assuming the responsibility to preside over the Eleventh Meeting of States Parties of the Convention and express our gratitude to you, your team and the Implementation Support Unit (ISU), especially its newly appointed Director, Ms Moraga, for all the preparatory work. We congratulate Ms. Moraga on her appointment; my country is pleased to see another woman leading the ISU.

Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union. Let me add some remarks in my national capacity.

Mister President,

This Conference marks the second year of implementing the Lausanne Action Plan (LAP), making the imperative of a world free of cluster munitions even more urgent, a world where sustainable care and support for re-integration into society is provided to victims of these inhumane weapons.

Italy regrets that many States, including the major possessors and producers, are still outside the Convention. We would like to express our appreciation for Nigeria and South Sudan joining the Convention and urge the countries not parties to the CCM to follow suit without delay so that we can move speedily towards the Convention's universalization. We would also like to commend Bulgaria and Slovakia for finishing to destroy their stockpiles.

Mister President,

Italy is concerned by the use of cluster munitions in Syria, Yemen, Libia, Nagorno-Karabakh and Ukraine. In this context, Italy firmly condemns the unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law and calls on Russia to immediately withdraw all its military forces from all the internationally recognised territory of Ukraine.

Civilians continue to represent the vast majority of victims, with a significant impact also on children. This is a trend we need to stop. We reiterate our firm condemnation of the indiscriminate use of cluster munitions by any actor, and urge all States, as well as non-State actors, not to produce, stockpile, use or transfer cluster munitions.

Mister President,

Since the beginning of the negotiating process, Italy has supported the Convention and engaged in fulfilling its national obligations. After completion of our national obligations, we continue to attach great importance to our responsibility to provide technical, material, and financial assistance to States Parties still affected by remnants of cluster munitions.

Since the institution of the "Italian Humanitarian Mine Action Fund" in 2001, the Italian Cooperation has devoted more than 70 million euros to humanitarian mine action programmes, focusing on clearance, stockpile destruction, risk education and victims assistance.

In this context, I would also like to highlight the extensive clearance of explosive remnants of war conducted by the Italian Armed Forces operating abroad and involved 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, which has also been engaged in training and capacity building activities. In our view, these activities stem from a humanitarian concern but lay the foundations for the economic development of affected countries. We also welcome the fundamental role that civil society has been playing in the CCM framework.

Let me also reaffirm that Italy highly values gender and diversity mainstreaming in the work of the CCM. In this vein, we support the establishment of gender focal points and we commend them for the work they have conducted throughout this year.

Mister President,

Being party to both the Oslo and Ottawa Conventions, Italy pays special attention to the development of all possible synergies between them and with other relevant international fora. To this end, Italy is proud to chair this year the Mine Action Support Group (MASG) which coordinates at global level humanitarian mine action programs, harmonizes priorities and increases donor support in the sector.

Thank you, Mister President.