



Permanent Mission of Italy  
UN - Geneva

**Convention on Cluster Munitions**  
**Second Review Conference – First Part**  
*30 August - 2 September 2022*

**Victim Assistance**

**Statement by Mr. Tancredi Francese**  
**Deputy Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament**

Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to express my gratitude to the two Coordinators, Chile and Mexico, for all their extensive work throughout the past year on victim assistance activities and for their report on the implementation of Article 5 and the respective actions of the LAP.

Mr. President,

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

Italy welcomes the attention given to this important issue in the Lausanne Action Plan, 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.

While welcoming the positive developments in States Parties with art. 5 obligations, as just presented by the two Coordinators, it is a common concern that cluster munition 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.

Mr. President,

In order to be effective, VA efforts have to be designed and implemented in a way to be consistent and integrate with humanitarian action as a whole. Assisting victims, their families and communities is an essential component of their path towards a better future, so should be conceived with a holistic perspective and in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

It is essential that victims benefitting from assistance are included in broader development, human rights, and humanitarian programs. These, in addition, need to be implemented according to the principle of non-discrimination, as well as take into account gender and diversity considerations, aiming to adequately address the different needs of different beneficiaries.

Italy believes in the importance of these principles, which are at the core of its Development Cooperation's policies and programs. For us, the protection of victims' rights and security is part and parcel of the broader promotion of the rights of all vulnerable groups, in particular persons with disabilities, in line with the CRPD. 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.

Mr. President,

In line with our commitment, in 2021 and 2022 we have increased our financial efforts, with a total amount of roughly 8,5 million Euros each year specifically dedicated to humanitarian demining. 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 three cases, as examples of Italy's commitment to victim assistance.

1) Being a highly affected region, the Italian Cooperation has been devoting increasing attention to the Sahel. For this reason, last year we have allocated a total of 2.000.000 to the ICRC victim assistance programs in Mali and Niger and we will continue keeping the focus on this two countries also this year.

2) Roughly 795.000 Euros have been devoted last year again to the ICRC-assisted project on the physical rehabilitation of mine/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. We will continue supporting this initiative also in the future.

3) Taking into consideration the persistent need of assistance, we have contributed 75.000 Euros to the Organization of American States (OAS) for its activities in Colombia, in order to support physical and psychological rehabilitation, vocational training and the implementation of micro-projects carried out by landmine victims, their families and communities.

Thank you Mr. President.