



Permanent Mission of Italy
UN - Geneva

Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction

4th Review Conference

Oslo, 28 November 2019

Statement on Victim Assistance

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

Mister President,

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

While welcoming positive developments in the States Parties fulfilment of their obligations, it is a common concern that 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.

Mister President,

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

We believe that, in order to be effective, Victim Assistance efforts have to be designed and implemented consistently and integrated with humanitarian action as a whole. Assisting victims, their families and communities is an essential component of their path towards a better future, so it should be conceived with a holistic perspective and in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

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.

Mister President,

In line with our commitment, we have increased our financial efforts in 2019, with a total amount of more than 4 million Euros 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 country, Syria has been an important focus of our activities. A contribution of 500.000 Euros was allocated to UNMAS to support a VA program that includes risk education activities.

2) 600.000 Euros have been devoted this year 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 only persons with disabilities, through a policy of "positive discrimination".

3) Taking into consideration the persistent need of assistance, 700.000 Euros have been donated to UNMAS for its activities in Iraq, to be added to a global amount in the previous three years of more than 1.5 million Euros devoted to clearance, risk education and capacity building.

Thank you, Mister President.