



Permanent Mission of Italy
UN - Geneva

**Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use
of Certain Conventional Weapons
which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate
effects**

2022 Meeting of the High Contracting Parties
General exchange of views
Geneva, 16 November 2022

**Statement by Amb. Leonardo Bencini,
Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament**

Mister President,

At the outset, let me join previous delegations in congratulating you on your appointment. We wish to thank you and your team for the important work conducted in preparation of the Review Conference. I assure you of Italy's full support for this meeting.

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

Mister President,

The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its annexed Protocols are fundamental instruments for creating and promoting International Humanitarian Law. We call on States not yet party to ratify or accede to the Convention and its Protocols as soon as possible

The CCW represents a unique forum that combines diplomatic, legal and military expertise through the active contribution of specialized institutions and civil society organizations and therefore the ideal venue to address current and emerging issues relating to weapons development and use.

In this context, Mr President, we wish to thank Amb. Flavio Damico of Brazil and his team for the tireless efforts made in chairing the Group of Governmental Experts on Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) throughout this challenging year. We commend the outcome of a consensus agreement on the final report of the GGE in July and continue to call for more ambitious results to be achieved in view of next year's session.

In this direction, we support the renewal of the Group's mandate for 2023 for at least 20 days of meetings, to allow enough time to discuss in depth, conduct a proper interagency coordination, and find consensus on normative formulations.

We reaffirm our full commitment to the position expressed by Italy – together with Germany, France, Finland, Sweden, the Netherlands, Norway, and Spain – in our joint working paper dated 13 July 2022, enshrining a two-tier approach on the regulation of weapons systems featuring autonomy. We recognize the importance of pushing ahead with the debate on the elaboration of a normative and operational framework, including through internationally agreed rules and limits. We continue to emphasize the importance of maintaining a full respect of international humanitarian law throughout the entire decision-making process leading to the use of force, as well as an appropriate degree of human control and accountability.

Mister President,

Italy is extremely concerned by the continued impact of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and their effects on urban areas and civilian populations that are deprived of crucial infrastructures providing energy, water, healthcare and education systems. In addition to have killed or harmed thousands of victims, IEDs also have considerable reverberating effects, such as displacement of populations, destruction of infrastructure and of historical and cultural heritage sites, ongoing psychological suffering and economic deprivation. In this context, we welcome the updated political Declaration on IEDs adopted last year by the High Contracting Parties to CCW Amended Protocol II and remain in full support of the relevant United Nations General Assembly Resolutions.

Regarding mines other than anti-personnel mines (MOTAPM), we deem crucial to restrict their use and to include a number of precautions reflected in Amended Protocol II and its Technical Annex in national military doctrines and plans. These measures, already integrated into the Italian Forces' practice, are meant not only to decrease the possible harm to civilians but also to facilitate clearance activities at the end of hostilities. We think that current practices can benefit and improve from the experience of those States that have relevant experience in military operations and that have shown to act responsibly and always in compliance with IHL. We believe this is an important issue which deserves further discussion and should remain on the CCW agenda.

We think these efforts of the international community to be particularly timely and more than ever important in light of the unjustified and unprovoked war of Russia against Ukraine in which the Russian use of anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions has been reported.

Thank you, Mister President.