



Permanent Mission of Italy
UN - Geneva

**Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War
additional to the 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**

16th Conference of the High Contracting Parties
Geneva, 14 November 2022

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

Mister President,

At the outset, let me congratulate you on your appointment and assure you of our full support and cooperation. Italy aligns itself with the statement of the European Union. I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

Mister President,

Explosive remnants of war cause devastating and indiscriminate humanitarian and socio-economic consequences for entire civilian communities that are deprived from hospitals, schools, houses and the possibility of conducting again a normal life in affected lands.

Italy is therefore particularly attached to the full implementation of Protocol V through international cooperation efforts and activities to promote its universalization. Our contribution to ERW-related activities is channeled through a dedicated Trust Fund for Humanitarian Demining, which finances programmes targeting landmines, IEDs and explosive remnants of war, including cluster munitions. Since the establishment of the Fund in 2001, Italy has devoted approximately 80 million Euros to Mine Action programmes and has doubled its budget for 2021 with respect to 2020, for a total of more than 8.5 million euros, which was confirmed for this year, as a sign of renewed commitment to the destruction and clearance of these devices.

Our activities include mapping and remediation of minefields; the acquisition and transfer of demining technologies; training of local personnel capable of independently conducting demining activities and clearance of lands with EWRs; risk education and risk reduction campaigns; assistance to victims, including psychophysical rehabilitation and socio-economic reintegration. Assisting victims, their families and communities is crucial to the reintegration of the individual in the socio-economic sphere of his or her country and the opportunity of a new life, so it should be conceived with a holistic perspective and in line

with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences have even exacerbated the conditions of the most vulnerable groups which face situations of risk and emergencies.

Italy provides financial support to humanitarian demining projects in a variety of countries from Afghanistan to Syria from Mali to Niger and others. More recently, in Afghanistan, within the framework of the "Special Appeal: Disability and Mine Action" of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), we provide victims of explosive ordnances with prostheses and physiotherapy, home care, the managerial and technical training for more than 150 employees from centres and orthotic schools managed by the ICRC. In Iraq, through the United Nations Mines Action Service (UNMAS), we support the improvement of national capacities for the management of explosive risks and risk education; training and awareness-raising activities on the risks of explosives for the most affected communities; risks assessment and clearance activities. Recently, we have also been working with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) on the development of an e-learning platform devoted to EORE.

We also attach great importance to national reporting which serves many useful purposes, including building confidence and promoting the work of Protocol V on issues such as clearance, recording and retention of information. We encourage all High Contracting Parties to fulfil these obligations in a timely and effective manner.

Mister President,

Our collective efforts on the universalization and implementation of Protocol V are timely and more than ever important in light of the unjustified, unprovoked and illegal war of Russia against Ukraine. According to many independent reports, Russia is using explosive weapons in civilian areas destroying critical infrastructure and provoking unbearable harm for man, women and children.

Mister President,

As a final point, I would like to touch upon one fundamental area of work for Protocol V: the management of munitions sites. In Italy, the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines couple with standardized procedures for munitions sites management established by national laws and detailed through regulations by each Service of our Armed Forces.

We deem securing stored munitions is crucial for the safety of military personnel operating on site, as well as of nearby civilian populations and installations. In this context, we particularly praised the active work of the GICHD on inventories of ammunitions.

Thank you, Mister President.