

Fifth Meeting of States Parties to the Ottawa Convention  
(Bangkok 15-19 September)

Statement by H.E. Ambassador Carlo Trezza, Head of the Italian Delegation

Mister President,

I have already taken the floor during the part of this meeting dedicated to a general exchange of views and I did so on behalf of the European Union.

I now take the floor in my capacity as Head of Italian Delegation to present the latest measures taken so far by Italy to implement the Ottawa Convention.

As you know Italy is among the Countries that have joined the Ottawa Convention at an early stage and is committed to its full and rapid implementation. At present the main priorities which we pursue are the following:

-Universalisation: In addition to the efforts made as Presidency of the European Union, Italy has also developed an intensive activity on a national basis to universalize the Mine Ban Convention. Many important countries have yet to adhere to this important disarmament, development and humanitarian instrument and we shall pursue this goal both nationally and on a collective basis.

-Concerning article 1 of the Ottawa Convention I wish to remind that article 5 of Italian ratification law of the treaty, which concerns the issue of joint military operations with countries which have not joined the Convention, allows the participation of Italian troops only if such operations are compatible with the provisions of the Convention. Italian

forces continue to receive strict instructions to abstain from participating in actions contrary to the letter and to the spirit of the Ottawa Convention.

-With regard to article 2, I wish to confirm that the scope of the Italian legislation is probably wider than the one foreseen by the Convention when it comes to definitions. Indeed according to our law: "Anti Personnel Mine means any munition or device which can be placed on, under, inside or near the ground or any surface area, and designed or adaptable –by means of specific mechanisms- so as to explode, cause an explosion or release incapacitating substances as a consequence of the presence, proximity or contact of a person". This definition also therefore includes Anti Vehicle mines with anti-handling device which are assimilated to Anti Personnel Mines.

-With regard to article 3, I wish to reiterate that, despite the fact that the Italian legislation allows the retention of 10.000 mines for the purpose of research and training, the total number, retained in accordance with the Ottawa Convention, is of 811.

-With regard to article 4 I wish to underline that Italy who will co-cochair the Standing Committee on Stockpile Destruction, completed the destruction of its entire stockpile in october 2002, one year before the deadline.

-With regard to article 5, Italy will make an "ad hoc" presentation on the activities of the Italian Explosive Ordnance Disposal Centre.

-Finally, with regard to article 6 I wish to inform that, in addition to the 2,58 million Euros already announced during the last Standing

Committee on Mine Clearance, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided to allocate 1,5 million of Euros for mine clearance operations in Iraq. Moreover the Italian "Fund for Humanitarian De-mining", which is the main national financial instrument to support international mine action, will be refinanced in the budget following fiscal year 2003.

Thank you Mr President