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,

Italy remains deeply concerned by the indiscriminate humanitarian and socio-economic impacts of explosive remnants of war, especially on civilians. We therefore welcome ongoing work in the framework of Protocol V and support efforts to enhance its implementation and promote its universalization.

We also attach great importance to national reporting, which serves many useful purposes, including building confidence and allowing us to understand progress made in implementing the Protocol. We therefore encourage all High Contracting Parties to fulfil their reporting obligations in a timely and effective manner.

Mister President,

We strongly believe in the importance of international cooperation in this particular field, in order to support States Parties’ implementation of Protocol V through our long-standing commitment. 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 more than 70 million Euros to Mine Action programmes and has doubled its budget for 2021 with respect to 2020, as a sign of renewed commitment. Our focus is on clearance, stockpile destruction, risk education, and victim assistance.
Italy provides financial support to humanitarian demining projects according to an integrated approach, which couples clearance activities with preventative measures aiming to promote risk awareness of communities living in ERW-affected territories. Italian-funded interventions, therefore, include mine-risk education activities in schools, universities and community recreational centers. Recently, for instance, we have been working with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining on the development of an e-learning platform devoted to EORE.

Within the framework of international military operations, theatre deployment includes the dispatch of first aid units for any kind of assistance, including for the treatment of local military personnel and civilians victims of explosive ordnance.

Mister President,

We welcome the attention given to Victim Assistance during the work of the experts and the Decision of the High Contracting Parties to appoint a Special Coordinator on this issue. 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. Moreover, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is a hard reminder to all of us of the importance to do more to ensure the safety and protection of the most vulnerable groups in situations of risk and emergencies.

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,

Before concluding, let me briefly touch on a topic we believe represents another fundamental area of work for Protocol V: the management of munitions sites. Securing stored munitions is of primary importance for the safety of military personnel operating on site, as well as of nearby civilian populations and installations. We believe that the adoption of practical safety measures and standards should be accompanied by awareness-raising activities focusing on the risks of unplanned explosions in munitions sites and of the diversion of munitions, with serious security implications.

In Italy, standardized procedures for munitions sites management are established by national laws, and detailed through regulations by each Service of our Armed Forces, which also take into account the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines. Such procedures include provisions on regular safety and security checks, access rules by personnel and registration, munitions records and inspections.

Thank you, Mister President.