Mr. Chair,

Italy aligns itself with the statement of the European Union, and would like to add some remarks in its national capacity.

Italy strongly supports all international instruments restricting or prohibiting the use of weapons contrary to International Humanitarian Law. The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its Protocols are crucial in this regard, and their universalization and full implementation remain fundamental.

We share the deep concern at the growing use and impacts of IEDs, which pose serious threats to civilians, humanitarian workers and peacekeeping personnel in conflict afflicted and post-conflict areas.

Both preventative and remedial strategies must be pursued to counter such a threat, at all levels, starting with the establishment of appropriate regulatory frameworks. The need for such action was recognized in successive UNGA resolutions on “Countering the threat posed by IEDs”, which Italy co-sponsored. We welcome the report presented by the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 71/72, which translates this need into concrete recommendations.

We also welcome the informal meetings on Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas and Mines other than anti-personnel mines in the framework of the CCW, as excellent opportunities to deepen our understanding of these topics in preparation for the next Conference of the High Contracting Parties of the Convention.

Italy commends the in-depth work carried out by the GGE on LAWS and its substantive outcome. We share the principles, on which the Group identified strong convergence, that International Humanitarian Law must apply to all weapons systems, and that any existing or future weapon system must be subject to human control, particularly in relation to the ultimate decision to use lethal force. We support the renewal of the GGE mandate for 2019, with a view to paving the way towards a consensual Political Declaration.
Mr. Chair,

Italy is extremely concerned by the indiscriminate humanitarian and socio-economic impacts of anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions, especially on civilians. Universalization and full implementation of the Ottawa and Oslo Conventions are among our priorities.

Nationally, we completed the destruction of stockpiles of antipersonnel mines in 2002 and of cluster munitions in 2015. We also destroyed cluster munition stockpiles retained for purposes permitted by art. 3.6 of the Convention.

Internationally, we continue to allocate resources to mine action programmes relating to all explosive remnants of war, focusing on clearance, stockpile destruction, risk education, and victim assistance, as well as advocacy activities for the universalization of Ottawa and Oslo Conventions. Since 2001, we have devoted close to 55m EUR to Mine Action programmes to recipients including Afghanistan, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Gaza, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, and Sudan. We also engage in capacity-building, training programmes and sharing of technical expertise.

Our programmes rely on partnerships with the UN, other international and regional organizations, civil society, and survivor representatives. In particular, we have established a long-term and fruitful cooperation with the ICRC and UNMAS.

Italy attaches great importance to assisting survivors and their families as a fundamental component of humanitarian aid and as a key element in long-term development strategies. We particularly engage in promoting gender- and diversity-responsive assistance, aiming to adequately address the different needs of different beneficiaries. Italy has indeed supported the development of an operational guidance by GMAP, aiming to disseminate good practices for gender and diversity-sensitive victim assistance in the mine action and broader disability sectors.

Mr. Chair,

Illicit, unregulated, or irresponsible transfers of conventional arms have pernicious humanitarian, social and economic effects. Italy is committed to the effective implementation of the ATT, the UN PoA on Small Arms, the International Tracing Instrument, and the Palermo Protocol.

The ATT’s unique contribution towards a more transparent and responsible arms trade, and to countering illicit arms transfers, relies on universalization and effective implementation as two sides of the same coin. We continue to call on all States that have not ratified the Treaty to do so as early as possible and we commend those that have joined the Treaty during the past year.

We welcome the successful conclusion of the 2018 Review Conference of the PoA on SALW and look forward to the implementation of its Outcome Document. We believe that applying the UN PoA provisions also to SALW ammunition would be beneficial. We also continue to stress the fundamental link between sustainable development, peace, and security, as recognized by the 2030 Agenda.

Finally, Italy is concerned by the financial issues experienced by several of the Conventions mentioned so far. It is essential for States to abide by their mandatory financial obligations, in order to allow these instruments and their related support structures to function continuously and effectively.

Thank you, Mr Chair.