Madam President,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on your appointment and assure you of my delegation’s full support and cooperation for a positive and constructive outcome of this Review Conference.

Let me also join others in thanking you for your commendable efforts in ensuring that this Review Conference could take place, despite the financial difficulties faced by the CCW. In order to allow this regime and its Implementation Support Unit to function effectively, it is imperative that all States Parties comply with their financial obligations.

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

Madam President,

The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its annexed Protocols, through the prohibition or restriction of weapons having excessively injurious or indiscriminate effects, are fundamental instruments for the creation and promotion of International Humanitarian Law.

Universal membership in the Convention and its Protocols is a key goal that should continue to be strongly supported. We note with great satisfaction the new accessions to the Convention and its Protocols since the fourth review conference of 2011, and continue to call upon all States not yet party to ratify or accede to them as soon as possible.

Madam President,

In the framework of Amended Protocol II we have had the opportunity to discuss at length the challenges posed by Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) in both international and non-international conflicts as well as possible ways to counter their unlawful use at all levels. We welcome the Declaration on Improvised Explosive Devices adopted by the latest Annual Conference of the Protocol and support continued work on this issue in the next CCW review cycle.
Italy continues to be deeply concerned about the humanitarian impacts of Explosive Remnants of War and remains actively engaged in providing assistance for the full implementation of Protocol V.

Since 2001, we have devoted close to 50 million Euros to mine action programmes, focusing on clearance, stockpile destruction and assistance to victims. Recipients have included Bosnia-Herzegovina, Colombia, the Gaza Strip, Sudan, Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia, where we have often worked in partnership with multilateral, regional, or non-governmental institutions – such as UNMAS, the ICRC and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining.

We welcome the particular emphasis placed on cooperation and assistance and on victim assistance within Protocol V, as well as initiatives aimed at encouraging higher rates of national reporting.

Particularly in these two areas, we encourage increasing synergies between international instruments regulating interrelated areas of humanitarian law and conventional weapons.

A good example of such cross-convention cooperation was the side event on victim assistance held during the Mine Ban Treaty Meeting of two weeks ago in Santiago, and jointly organized by the victim assistance coordinators of the Ottawa and Oslo Conventions and of Protocol V of the CCW.

Madam President,

Since 2014 we have engaged in very useful exchanges of views on the features and implications of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems. In Italy’s view, the CCW remains the most appropriate forum to continue discussing this issue, with a view to further enhancing our common understanding of the multiple technical, legal, ethical, and military aspects involved.

In this regard, we fully support the recommendation submitted by the Chair of the 2016 Group of Experts, and relating to the establishment of an open-ended Group of Governmental Experts tasked to further discuss the matter, in the context of the objectives and purposes of the CCW.

We also look forward to further discussions on the question of mines other than antipersonnel landmines, as we believe that there would be value added in continuing to address this issue in the framework of the CCW, including in the form of a dedicated meeting of experts or group of experts.

Before concluding, Madam President, let me reiterate our deep appreciation for the input of civil society to our work, also through the sharing of knowledge and expertise, and whose active participation in the Conference we firmly support.

Thank you, Madam President