



**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Carlo Trezza
Head of the Italian Delegation to the Oslo Conference on Cluster Munitions
(Oslo, 22-23 February 2007)**

Thank you first of all for inviting my delegation to this international meeting of countries that are ready to explore ways to address in a determined and effective manner the pressing humanitarian issue of cluster munitions and are prepared to develop a new legally binding instrument. Indeed an increasing number of countries and humanitarian organizations have recognized that the use of cluster munitions has too often unacceptable humanitarian consequences. We agree that this is due to their frequently indiscriminate effects and the large number of hazardous unexploded duds left behind after a conflict is over. As a member of the European Union we are concerned about the humanitarian impact of cluster munitions which, quoting an EU recent declaration, "we consider as a particularly important element in the further work of the CCW". The EU also underlined that "the urgency in addressing the humanitarian impact of cluster munitions has been highlighted by recent events". Indeed the use of cluster munitions in past conflicts so far has caused – according to NGO calculations – as many as 11.000 victims.

Italy gives priority to working towards the kind of multilateral ban on those cluster munitions that have an unacceptable humanitarian impact you suggested in the letter calling for this meeting. Let me recall that during the last CCW Review Conference the Italian delegation indicated that Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War of the CCW is already a tangible result of the process aiming at mitigating the effects of explosive remnants of war, including unexploded cluster munitions. The existing legal provisions addressing the past conflict humanitarian threat should be now integrated with preventive legal provisions. Based on a motion adopted at that time by the Italian Chamber of Deputies, Italy had indicated that it could accept the establishment of an open ended CCW Group of governmental experts with the mandate to negotiate a legally binding instrument aimed at reducing the impact of

cluster munitions on civilian populations. A subsequent parliamentary resolution established further restrictions on the use of cluster munitions by Italian Armed Forces pending the approval of an ad hoc national legislation, called for the ratification of Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War and for a decisive diplomatic action for the creation of a Protocol VI on cluster munitions to be annexed to the CCW Convention, containing a very advanced set of possible prohibitions.

Moreover, Italian Armed Forces involved in peace-keeping activities, have always been very active in clearing territories of any kind of landmines, unexploded ordnances and explosive remnants of war, including cluster munitions, in every theatre of operations they have been engaged in over the last years.

On this basis my delegation is now ready to make further steps forward and, together with other participants in this meeting, to explore ways to address this pressing humanitarian issue in a determined and effective manner. In this spirit Italy would be ready to join a possible international moratorium on the use and transfer of cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians.