

**Opening Remarks dell'Ambasciatore Massari per la riunione ordinaria
annuale MASG di Ginevra**

Lunedì 29 aprile, ore 10.30, collegamento virtuale

Dear colleagues and partners,

It is my pleasure to open this MASG meeting and I extend my gratitude to all participants gathered in Geneva today.

Unfortunately, due to unavoidable commitments here at the United Nations in New York, I am unable to address this session in person. Nevertheless, I am eager to convey Italy's steadfast commitment as Presidency of the Mine Action Support Group for 2024.

As we are all aware, MASG serves as an important coordination platform for major donor countries engaged in humanitarian demining efforts. It has proven to be a useful forum for information exchange, financial coordination and resource pooling. Looking at today's agenda, I am confident that this meeting will prove to be once again fruitful.

Humanitarian demining plays a central role in promoting international peace and security. For this second year of Presidency, Italy's objective within the Group is to build upon the work carried out to date. We aim to highlight the nexus between humanitarian demining and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, spotlight the "humanitarian-recovery" link, and emphasize the pivotal role of demining not only in safeguarding civilians and humanitarian workers, but also as a prerequisite for the physical reconstruction of both rural and urban areas.

Looking at today's briefings about Gaza, Ukraine and Ethiopia, it is evident that humanitarian demining is, or will be, essential for restoring food security, facilitating the safe return of internally displaced persons, accelerating economic recovery, and implementing projects aimed at rebuilding resilient communities.

Under the framework of the G7 Presidency, Italy remains unwavering in its dedication to addressing global challenges through international cooperation. From this perspective, humanitarian demining holds a prominent place on our agenda.

Whether through technical expertise, financial support, or capacity-building measures, are resolute in our commitment to assist affected countries in their pursuit of a mine-free future.

Last year alone, Italy allocated more than 8 million euros to the Fund on Humanitarian Demining and has used other channels to fund activities of humanitarian demining in specific areas of the world. We stand firmly at the forefront of this endeavor, recognizing the imperative of humanitarian demining in fostering sustainable peace and stability.

I wish you engaging discussions and insightful presentations in today's meeting.

Thank you.