

## **Fourth State Consultation Round**

### **Statement of Italy**

**Geneva, 7 May 2026**

#### **Second Workstream: National IHL Committees**

Italy commends the efforts made by the co-chairs of Workstream 2 which is of particular importance for the effective implementation of IHL at the domestic level, as experienced in our context through the positive experience related to the Italian “National Commission for the Study and Development of IHL”, set up by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2021 and renewed in 2025: the following remarks also reflect lessons learned at the national level.

Italy regards the draft document as a valuable outcome of previous consultations. We particularly welcome its concise and practice-oriented approach, offering concrete suggestions and good practices on the role of national IHL committees and on their global and regional meetings, while also noting with appreciation that several of its recommendations are already reflected in our national practice.

With regard to competencies, Italy considers the non-exhaustive list of potential functions both comprehensive and useful, allowing each committee to adapt its role to national contexts. In this regard, further emphasis could be placed on the role of national IHL committees in preparing voluntary national IHL reports. Italy’s own experience in producing such a report in 2023 has demonstrated their value in strengthening domestic implementation and the role of the national IHL committee.

Regarding composition, Italy welcomes the emphasis on the multi-stakeholder nature of national IHL committees, which is consistent with its own experience. In this regard, Italy suggests explicitly including representatives of the National Red Cross or Red Crescent Society among the core full members of such bodies, given their specific mandate as recognized in the document. From a practical perspective, Italy also recommends expanding the provision on ad hoc participation in meetings to include not only “individuals with relevant expertise,” but particularly civil society organizations. In our experience, their involvement has enriched the activities of the Commission.

As for methods of operation, Italy appreciates the inclusion of practical suggestions, many of which are already reflected in its national practice, such as the establishment of working groups to address specific issues - for instance, ongoing initiatives related to the protection of persons with disabilities in armed conflict. We also welcome the reference to the preparation of regular progress reports to domestic entities, as our Committee already submits annual reports to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

While some references are already included in Annex 1, Italy suggests that Annex 2 should also explicitly mention bilateral or small-scale cooperation initiatives among national IHL committees as a way to reinforce regional cooperation. Italy has recently developed such cooperation with counterparts in Austria and Slovenia and considers that these formats and ad-hoc initiatives could usefully complement broader exchanges.

In conclusion, Italy welcomes the work carried out within this Workstream and reaffirms its commitment to contribute constructively to the ongoing dialogue, with a view to developing practical tools that can strengthen the domestic implementation of IHL through IHL committees.