

**Statement by Ambassador Stefano Toscano,
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Mr. President

This is the first Intersessional since the last Review Conference in Maputo. Let us take the opportunity to discuss what it takes for the Maputo Action Plan to be fulfilled and for the commitment to end the suffering caused by anti-personnel mines by 2025 to be met.

The Convention has entered into force more than 15 years ago. Investments made so far start to bear fruit, with ever more States declaring completion of their obligation under Article 5. Still, this is no time to decrease our engagement and efforts towards the implementation of the Convention. To the contrary: fulfilling the Maputo commitment calls in our opinion for the following:

1. First, for the continued political commitment of States – both affected countries and donor countries
 - The political commitment of affected States is of utmost importance. Although competing with other humanitarian and development challenges, mine action has to remain high on the agenda of affected States. A well functioning mine action programme requires full national ownership.
 - Financial contributions from donor countries remain crucial as well. Affected States still need the support of the international community – in the spirit of the Convention. And this is money well invested - as completion is within grasp for a number of States Parties.
2. Second, it calls for continued international cooperation and exchange of experiences and knowledge

- Yes, clearance operations look essentially the same as fifteen years ago with the use of detectors, animals and machines. However, methods have evolved considerably. In particular, tremendous efforts have been and are still deployed to improve survey and clearance operations. The implementation of land release standards combining non-technical surveys, technical surveys and clearance need to become the norm. They need to be disseminated further in order to accelerate progress towards the implementation of the Convention.
 - Countries facing contamination encounter similar challenges, in terms of planning, prioritization, scarcity of resources, efficiency of operations, victim assistance programmes, and so on. We have to promote exchanges of experience and expertise among these countries – for example through linguistic platforms as the ones initiated by the GICHD.
3. Finally, let me stress to important role of the implementation support unit
- The Maputo Action Plan is – and rightly so – an ambitious plan. It sets clear and unambiguous targets and requires concrete actions from States Parties. In this context, an implementation support unit is key. It provides support to the implementation machinery and office holders; it provides support to individual States Parties, including by providing advice and technical support on implementation and universalization, and it provides information about the Convention, including towards States not party and the public.

I wish you a productive meeting.

Thanks you.