

**Inter-sessional Meeting
Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
25-26 June 2015**

EU statement on international cooperation and assistance

I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union.

The following countries align themselves with this statement: Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova.

Mr President,

The European Union wishes to thank the Chair of the Committee on enhancement of cooperation and assistance for the Committee's activity report. Ending the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines is a shared commitment. The European Union supports States parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention by providing assistance and helping them to fully and effectively implement the Treaty.

In the Maputo Action Plan it was reaffirmed that the Convention's shared goals can be better advanced with enhanced ownership by States and by improved international cooperation between States seeking assistance and those that can provide it. We fully share these views. In addition to cooperation with governments at national level, international cooperation is essential to the success of work on the ground and to increase the impact of the different kinds of support that can be made available, including at local level.

We believe that mine action should increasingly be integrated into the development agenda. It can promote integration of communities by making new economic means available and tackle humanitarian impediments.

International Cooperation and Assistance can be best accomplished if synergies under other international instruments pertinent in different countries can be developed, ensuring full usage and interdependence of different programmes and projects. These synergies are equally relevant to ensure an applicable coherent legal framework.

Taking into account that anti-personnel mine issues and mine action are often a cross-border problem, the EU considers that international and regional organisations may make an important contribution to facilitating mine action between neighbouring States. This cooperation has the potential to be more cost effective and provide useful confidence-building measures between neighbouring countries or regions.

In order to ensure adequate integration of mine action into bilateral cooperation, it is necessary that mine-affected countries prioritise or sufficiently take on board mine action in their requests for general assistance, and that they make it a priority in their national indicative programmes, or if not possible, clearly mention it as sub-components of their priorities.

The EU is committed to supporting the implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Through a number of targeted projects, which included universalisation, mine clearance and victim assistance activities, we sought to enhance the pursuit of the aims of the Convention by supporting the implementation of the Cartagena Action Plan 2010-2014. Currently, the EU and its Member States are working on new projects on how to best promote the implementation of the Maputo Action Plan. These projects will also focus on victim assistance and mine clearance activities. Efforts to support the universalisation of the Convention and its norms remain close to our hearts.

Beyond those future projects, the EU and its Member States have already contributed more than 550 Million Euro to Mine Action since the last Review Conference in Cartagena, Colombia, representing more than one third of the world's financial assistance to projects in the mine action area in heavily affected countries and areas of the world. This makes the EU and its Member States the leading donor in this area. These significant contributions are also paving the way for reconstruction and economic and social development. In 2014, the EU signed new contracts to implement projects in several areas of the world, such as Angola, Colombia, Lao PDR, Palestine, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia/Croatia, Turkey and Ukraine, amounting to a total of more than 50 million Euros.

The European Union will continue to cooperate with and, where possible, extend assistance to those States Parties that most need support in meeting their commitments under the Convention, and to non-States Parties that significantly support mine action: this will continue to be carried out in coordination with other donors and in close cooperation with countries concerned.