

Meetings of the Standing Committees of the Anti- Personnel Mine Ban Convention

9 April 2014

Opening remarks delivered by Ambassador Stefano Toscano, Director, GICHD

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentleman,

It is a honour for me to open this year's meetings of the Standing Committees of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, even more so given that 2014 is an important year for the Convention.

First, we celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of its entry into force. During these fifteen years, significant achievements have been realised by affected countries and the international community towards the Convention's goals. The Convention has reached 161 States Parties and continued efforts are being undertaken to pursue its universalization. Each year, an increasing number of States Parties comply with their Article 5 clearance obligation. A sustained partnership between States Parties, international organisations, operators and civil society played a key role in making these and other achievements possible.

Second, and in spite of much progress made, we are all aware that the job is by far not finished. 2014 provides us with the opportunity to review the status and achievements of the Convention and to define the way forward with a renewed commitment from States Parties and their partners. We are looking forward to the discussions tomorrow at the preparatory meeting, and in June in Maputo.

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention has a common history with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining. Soon after the Convention entered into force, the GICHD started actively to support the implementation of the Convention by providing the organization and venue for the Intersessional Work Programme established in 1999. At a time when we celebrate anniversaries, the GICHD remains committed to the Convention and feels privileged to contribute to its implementation through its advice to States Parties, the development of tools and methods aimed to assist States Parties in implementing the Convention, and by hosting the Implementation Support Unit.

I wish you every success for the upcoming discussions and preparations for the Review Conference.

Thank you.