

Opening remarks by Ambassador Stefano Toscano, GICHD Director

Intersessional Meetings of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention WMO Building, Geneva, 22 May 2019

Thank you, Mister President, and allow me to join you in welcoming all participants to Geneva for these 2019 intersessional meetings.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear Colleagues

2019 is a fundamental year for the work the Convention. The upcoming Fourth Review Conference will afford us a unique opportunity to take stock of what was achieved under the Maputo Action Plan and what is still outstanding, as well as to put in place a robust, ambitious and measurable action plan for the next five years.

Much has already happened since the beginning of the year in this regard, and these intersessional meetings – together with the first preparatory meeting next Friday – will undoubtedly see further progress towards a successful Review Conference. Let me thank the Norwegian Presidency sincerely for the very inclusive process in the lead up to the Review Conference.

Inclusiveness is both opportunity and duty: The “Road to Oslo” is a unique chance for States Parties and all other mine action stakeholders collectively to establish the basis that will take the mine action sector to 2025. And we all have a responsibility to contribute to the three substantive documents that States Parties will adopt in Oslo: the Review Document, the Oslo Action Plan and the Political Declaration. The GICHD will play its part.

Dear colleagues,

Let me point out three aspects that we feel relevant to our current and future work:

Mine action enables broader agendas

First, let us reaffirm that mine action is an enabler of broader agendas – be they humanitarian, developmental or related to peace and security. Let us reaffirm that mine action is more than mine action: while pursuing its own objectives, it also represents a prerequisite for additional transformative agendas, especially when it comes to improving the daily lives of affected communities.

For this to happen, though, mine action prioritization and planning must be informed by the needs and objectives of broader humanitarian, developmental as well as peace and security stakeholders. Conversely, these very stakeholders need to take more advantage of what mine action can offer to them, for example in terms of better knowledge of the explosive risk landscape.

Information management now allows that to happen if so wished

Thanks to state-of-the-art information management tools such as IMSMA Core, and this is my second point, we have now broken down the technological barriers to doing this. There remains, however, a political obstacle to information sharing, a 'reflex' - as we see it – to keep information close to our chest. There might well be legitimate security reasons for this, but they can and should be addressed if we want to fulfill our potential as an enabling sector.

GAMA is now open for business

For example, and this is my final point, we have recently launched an initiative called 'Global Awareness of Mine Action' (GAMA), which allows willing mine action partners to provide engaging, interactive views of the status of their explosive risk and the progress of their mine action programmes, and this without compromising data sovereignty.

Please feel encouraged to approach us should you be interested in GAMA. Making information available to donors, human security actors and the broader public will ensure that your work has maximum impact and truly enables humanitarian efforts, sustainable development and ultimately, sustainable peace.

Dear colleagues

The fulfillment of the Convention's obligations requests mine action actors to cooperate closely. So let the implementation of the Convention be supported by clear and strong processes. Individualized approach, together with key factors such as national ownership, strategic planning, information sharing as well as application of the latest standards, methods and tools must play a central role. The GICHD will maintain its engagement towards the development and implementation of comprehensive and integrated country-support packages that respond to the specific contexts faced by affected States.

Thank you.