

STATEMENT
by H.E. Ambassador Yurii KLYMENKO,
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations Office and other
International Organizations in Geneva
(APMBC Meeting of Experts, May 22 – 24, 2019)

Mr. President,

I would like to start by extending my warmest congratulations to you on the assumption of your duties and wishing you every success in this endeavour. Please be assured of my delegation's full support and cooperation with you to advance the objectives of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

Mr. President (*Mr./Ms. Coordinator*),
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

Ukraine considers that the presence of anti-personnel mines and other dangerous explosive devices is a direct long-term threat to the civil population, as well as a significant challenge for humanitarian operations. Our country recognizes and highly values the important role played by the APMBC as an effective disarmament mechanism of sustaining regional stability and addressing post-conflict remedial measures in order to minimize the occurrence, risk and effects of Explosive Remnants of War (ERW). Supporting its universalization, our country acceded to the Convention on June 1, 2006 and, thus, obliged to destroy and dispose of all stockpiled anti-personnel mines, inherited from the former Soviet Union, which were kept at the arsenals of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Accordingly, Ukraine has not been using and is not planning to use weaponry, banned by the Convention.

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

Since February 20, 2014 Ukraine, as you well know, is under the armed aggression of the Russian Federation, which is not a State Party to the APMBC and actively uses anti-personnel mines. Due to these ongoing hostilities, our country must deal with a drastically increasing number of this weaponry and other dangerous ERW in the southeast of Ukraine. Planted by Russia-backed illegal armed groups in residential areas and routes of communication between inhabited localities, these mines, which have contaminated over 8% of the territory of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, pose a direct threat not only to the military personnel, but also to the civil population, causing death and severe casualties among innocent citizens, including children. It is also worth mentioning that anti-personnel mines have been used by

the Russian Federation to establish mine fields on the administrative border between Crimea and the rest of Ukraine's territory.

Furthermore, according to the operational summary reports of the Joint Forces in the Southeast of Ukraine, the illegal armed groups, supported by the Russian Federation, are shelling Ukrainian soil with prohibited by the Minsk Agreements weaponry almost on a daily basis, leaving behind hundreds of unexploded and potentially dangerous remnants of war. Just recently, on May 15, the armed formations of the Russian Federation have violated the cease-fire regime 24 times, 9 times of which – with the use of 120 and 82 mm mortar shells.

Thus, the indiscriminate weaponry continues to be one of the most common causes of casualties among the civilian population in eastern Ukraine (about one third of the total number of civilians affected by the armed conflict).

Last year more than 50 people were killed and 209 were injured due to the hostile activities of illegal armed groups in eastern Ukraine: 112 of these victims, including children, suffered from mines and other ERW.

In 2019, there were six registered cases of the use by the above-mentioned illegal armed groups of PPM-type PMN-2 mines, supplied by the Russian Federation. 8 servicemen of the Armed Forces of Ukraine were wounded by the explosions of these devices.

Using this opportunity, the Ukrainian side calls upon the worldwide community to urge Russia to cease its hostilities against my country, return to the tenets of the international rules-based international order and strictly adhere to the Minsk Agreements.

**Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,**

Despite the above-mentioned significant challenges in the security field related to Russia's ongoing since 2014 armed aggression against Ukraine, our country does its utmost to further comply with its obligations under this fundamental international document, as well as the Maputo Action Plan. The Ukrainian side each year provides the ISU with updated reports containing relevant information on APMBC implementation.

As of May 1, 2019, almost 2.5 million units of PFM-1 (1C) mines were destroyed. At the same time, 3.3 million PFM-1 (1C) mines remain to be destroyed.

Currently there are almost 150 thousand POM-2 anti-personnel mines in storage in Ukraine, all of which are kept in one arsenal. These mines are not allowed to be issued and are planned for further disposal. Out of the above-mentioned number of

POM-2 anti-personnel mines, over 37 thousand units were issued for utilization during the first quarter of this year (the process of their disposal is still ongoing). The remaining 111 thousand POM-2 anti-personnel mines are scheduled to be disposed of by the end of this year.

Furthermore, all anti-personnel mines, which at present are stored in Ukraine, are subject to destruction. The storage of anti-personnel mines for conducting exercises/trainings is not foreseen.

Ukraine has also made significant legislative efforts to prevent violations of the Ottawa Convention in areas that are under the control and/or jurisdiction of our country. In particular, on January 25, 2019, the Law of Ukraine “On Mine Action in Ukraine” of December 6, 2018 came into force. This piece of legislation defines the legal and organizational foundations for the implementation of anti-mine activities in Ukraine, as well as the peculiarities of state regulation in the relevant sphere. In addition to this Law, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine adopted Resolution “On the approval of the rules for the marking of hazards associated with mines and explosive remnants of war” of April 17, 2019, as well as Resolution “On approval of the Procedure for using the funds provided for in the state budget for the implementation of measures aimed at reducing the social, economic and environmental impact of explosive devices on the life and activities of the population (mine action) and informing the population about the dangers of explosive devices” of March 6, 2019.

**Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,**

Speaking of current humanitarian demining efforts in Ukraine, the main task for the Ukrainian side is to carry out multipart measures for the humanitarian demining of territories located outside the areas of combat operations, namely:

- mine action in settlements and prompt response to cases of detection of explosive devices;
- ensuring the safe conduct of infrastructure renovation works;
- planned humanitarian demining of agricultural areas and natural ecosystems, including water bodies and hydro-technical structures mined by Russia-backed terrorists.

In addition, the units of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine are systematically involved in performing the tasks of inspection and demining of territories to ensure the safety of activities of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission and other international organizations in the areas of combat operations in the immediate vicinity of the “demarcation line” and in the so-called “gray zone”.

In 2019, as of this month, during the implementation of measures related to the humanitarian demining of the territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, 688 field trips were carried out; 1 thousand 320 hectares of territory were inspected and cleared; 4 thousand explosive devices were detected and disposed of.

In addition, Ukrainian pyrotechnic units during 2019 (as of May 10, 2019) destroyed 50 thousand 472 explosive devices, including 45 thousand 319 PFM anti-personnel mines and 490 units of CPOM-2 cluster anti-personnel mines. This work was carried out within the framework of the realization of the Implementing Agreement between the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the NATO Maintenance and Supply Organization (NAMSO) on the Destruction of Light Weapons and Small Arms, Conventional Ammunition and Anti-Personnel Mines of PFM-1 Type.

Ukraine is also currently taking measures aimed at technical re-equipment, replacement of obsolete equipment, as well as replacement of units remaining in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, which are performing humanitarian demining tasks in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

The primary needs of Ukraine related to the technical re-equipment of the units of the State Emergency Service are: 60 sets of devices for finding explosive devices, 200 sets of armor protection for pyrotechnics, 10 armored vehicles for the transportation of detected mines and other explosive devices, as well as equipment for mechanical demining.

Moreover, Ukraine is interested in continuing close cooperation with relevant international organizations on education of the population on the risks associated with the explosive devices, which could include the production and distribution of educational posters, leaflets, commercials, as well as the organization of mine-safety seminars and lectures in educational institutions.

**Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,**

Our country, as always, remains fully committed to its obligations under the APMBC and relies on the worldwide community's further support of our endeavors in implementing the Convention, especially in these challenging times for Ukraine.

The delegation of Ukraine looks forward to productive and fruitful discussions, and is ready for joint efforts to achieve a successful outcome of the Meeting as we approach the Forth Review Conference of the APMBC.

I thank you.