

**Meetings of the Standing Committees
of the Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines
(Geneva, 20 - 24 June 2011)**

**EU Statement
(20 June 2011)**

Mr. Chairman,

I speak on behalf of the European Union.

Last year, in welcoming the outcome of the Second Review Conference of the Convention in Cartagena de Indias (Colombia), the EU made particular mention of the document “A shared Commitment for a Mine-Free World: The 2009 Cartagena Declaration”. Our view was that together with the “Cartagena Action Plan 2010-2014”, we now had an agreed basis to guide us in our fight against antipersonnel landmines and their effects for the next five years.

The financial support provided by the European Union hitherto, that is the combined efforts to mine action of the EU institutions and the 27 EU Member States, now surpasses two billion Euros over the past ten years. This is around half of the world’s financial assistance to mine action in that period. During that time, in addition to our assistance to individual countries and regions, the EU has contributed to overall universalisation and implementation of the Convention through various forms of outreach, including regional seminars, bilateral technical assistance and sponsorship of representatives of non-signatory states at meetings of the Convention.

In 2010, landmine action spending by individual member states continued and the contribution from the budget of the EU for co-operation and assistance to mine action was 40 million Euros in support of the following countries: Afghanistan, Angola, Belarus,

Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cyprus, Georgia, Nepal, Occupied Palestinian Territories/Gaza, Pakistan and Ukraine, with several projects in Angola, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Colombia, Ethiopia, Lebanon, Sri Lanka and Pakistan in the pipeline.

Mr. Chairman,

The last EU support programme expired in May 2010, just one year ago, and I am pleased to inform you that we are working closely with the Implementation Support Unit to reach agreement on a new Council Decision in support of the Convention; this time focussing on the implementation of the Cartagena Action Plan. The agreement will focus in particular on victim assistance, compliance with mine clearance commitments and universalisation efforts. It thus includes a new cycle of activities to support the implementation of key commitments made by States Parties at the Cartagena Summit.

Mr Chairman

I am sure that the EU is not alone in regretting that, despite our efforts and despite the existence of the Convention, anti-personnel mines continue to kill or harm people, and that they continue to be an obstacle to the return of refugees and internally displaced persons. They also continue to hinder humanitarian aid operations and to hamper economic reconstruction and social development, thus rendering less efficient the various assistance efforts made in mine-affected countries by the EU and other donors.

Mr. Chairman

The overall aim of the Convention is a world free of anti-personnel mines. The EU actively pursues its objective of 'zero victims', and this objective underlies our belief both that there should be no new mine victims and that the EU should provide a high level of sustainable assistance to landmine victims worldwide, with mine action integrated into the development agenda so as to guarantee sustainable results as far as is possible.

Mr. Chairman,

In closing, I would like briefly to express the gratitude of the EU to the ISU for its important work both in general and on behalf of the EU. We understand that arrangements are in the pipeline with a view to formalising relations between State Parties and the ISU in the coming years and we welcome this agreement. Let me also thank again this year the GICHD for its continued logistic, administrative and technical support to the ISU, and also the Swiss Government for its extensive funding of the GICHD budget.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.