

## **Opening of the week of Standing Committee meetings of the Mine Ban Convention**

### **Opening statement**

#### **Ambassador Susan Eckey, President of the Second Review Conference**

Dear colleagues, dear partners, dear friends,

As always, I am delighted, inspired and proud to be amongst friends, working together to implement the Mine Ban Convention, to fulfil its obligations and to make a difference for those who matter: People living with the consequences of anti-personnel mines. To quote the Cartagena Declaration: *We, the States Parties, "...reaffirm our commitment to ending the suffering caused by anti-personnel mines and to achieving a world free of mines. We are convinced that we will reach this goal in our lifetime."*

The Second Review Conference, the Cartagena Summit, was a great success. Again, I would like to thank the host country Colombia for creating an event that will long be remembered, and for making it an event filled with substance. Let me also thank our partners, international humanitarian organisations, civil society and not least the survivors, who with their presence and active participation in the preparations and in the conference ensured that the Cartagena Summit remained focused on the situation of survivors.

I have met many of you on different occasions during the first half of this year, but to those of you that I haven't seen since Cartagena – and actually to all of you – it is good to see you again!

And, we meet again because we have much to do. Again, to quote the Cartagena Declaration: *"As long as people remain at risk, we are compelled to do more to achieve our goal. Compliance makes a difference."*

Implementation of the Convention's provisions is a continuous process. And every year we meet to discuss progress and remaining challenges, and to discuss how to improve our implementation, in an informal manner, learning from each other's experiences. That is the main purpose of this week's meetings of the Standing Committees of the Convention. We will hear national updates on victim assistance, on mine clearance, on stockpile destruction and on other provisions of the Convention. Time has been set aside for special interventions

on interesting related issues, for example the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, emphasising the importance of a rights-based approach to victim assistance. We will have a special session on cooperation and assistance on Friday, corresponding to the call in Cartagena for further focus on this issue. We will have a series of side-events organised by states, by international organisations, by civil society – providing us with useful arenas for informal discussions on not only our Convention, but on broader related areas such as development, humanitarian disarmament and armed violence.

I look forward to participating in the meetings and to have, I hope, frank and fruitful discussions both inside the meeting room, and over coffee and croissants outside the meeting room. I would like to invite everybody to come and talk to me and my team, to discuss small issues or big issues, or just to say “hello” and “wasn’t it wonderful when we last met in Cartagena”. I would also encourage you all to build networks, to discuss with partners, to meet new colleagues – to make new friends as we strive to take our work one step further, together and therefore stronger, in our shared commitment for a mine-free world. To quote the Cartagena Declaration one last time: “*A mine-free world is possible*”.

I wish you all a very good week.

Thank you.