

New Zealand Statement to the Fifteenth Meeting of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

Madam
Thank you ~~Mr~~ President.

At the outset New Zealand would like to put on record our sincere appreciation for Chile's outstanding stewardship of our Convention, in particular by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Heraldo Muñoz, and by *you* Ambassador Mauras and *your* her team. We wish to assure you of New Zealand's full support this week as you carry out your important work.

New Zealand recognises the significant impact that this Convention has had since it opened for signature in 1997. The Convention has been – and will remain – a landmark in international humanitarian law. It embodies a thoroughly modern approach to security: one that, rightly, places central emphasis on the value of human life and livelihoods.

Now supported by 162 State Parties, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention is a reminder of the difference that we can make – not only at the level of international law and policy but also in the everyday lives of civilians affected by conflict – when we put humanity first. New Zealand recognises the importance of universalisation of our Convention and calls on those remaining States that have yet to do so to sign and ratify it without further delay.

Madam
~~Mr~~ President,

New Zealand continues to condemn in the strongest terms any use of anti-personnel landmines by anyone, anywhere. We are deeply disappointed at reports of landmine use over the last

year both by States outside this Convention and by non-State actors.

We note that the recently released Landmine Monitor for 2016 reports a 75% increase in the number of casualties from landmines, victim-activated IEDs, cluster munition remnants and other explosive remnants of war. While these statistics do reflect improvements in data collection and analysis the trend they evidence is deeply disturbing. We would highlight, however, a drop in the number of recorded casualties attributed specifically to anti-personnel mines – from 640 in 2014 to 509 last year. Although this is a positive development for our Convention it also shows that many challenges remain ahead, particularly in light of reports that funding for mine clearance activities has dropped and is now at its lowest level since 2005.


Mr President,

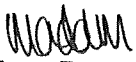
Although New Zealand has not itself suffered the brutal effects of landmines we recognise our ability to make a credible difference on the ground in countries that have. It is apparent that clearance activities, along with technical and financial support, must be prioritized if we are to achieve the 2025 deadline laid out in the Maputo Declaration and our ultimate goal of a world free from landmines. Against this backdrop, New Zealand is proud to be a consistent provider of funding for mine clearance, including through the provision of NZ\$1.5m in core funding to UNMAS, to undertake essential mine action-related activities.


New Zealand is also pleased to support a range of specific in-country projects. We support clearance operations in Palestine and Lao PDR and have committed to contributing NZ\$1 million

towards the global demining initiative in Colombia over the next three years. In addition to this financial contribution, New Zealand stands ready to share our expertise in mine clearance. With the support of the Global Demining Initiative, we are confident that Colombia will achieve its goal to become a landmine-free country by 2021.


~~Mr~~ President,

Full and effective implementation of the Convention is crucial in order to protect civilians from the devastating impact of anti-personnel mines. New Zealand encourages all States Parties with ongoing stockpile destruction and mine clearance obligations, including those who have requested extensions to their deadlines, to complete that work as soon as possible. We also welcome the significant work that has been done to strengthen victim assistance over the past year – this is important work that must endure even after the last landmine has been destroyed.


Finally, ~~Mr~~ President, please allow me to put on record New Zealand's deep appreciation for the work of the Implementation Support Unit, to which we were pleased to have announced a modest multi-year contribution at the 2016 pledging conference. Although it is too soon to know whether the financial system adopted at last year's MSP will ensure sustainable resourcing for the ISU, we encourage all States Parties to provide whatever support they can to the Unit.


Thank you ~~Mr~~ President.