

## President of the 18MSP – Opening Statement

16 November 2020

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, dear friends:

Good Morning

Thank you for joining me today and allow me to express my deepest gratitude for the confidence that you have expressed in me and my country .I am honoured to have had the opportunity to serve as your President over the course of 2020. It has been a very difficult year and it is unfortuante that we could not be together in person today .

I am also humbled as I am following the Presidency of Ambassador Hans Brattskar of Norway who showed incredible leadership in presiding over the Oslo Review Conference.

The Oslo Action Plan that has been adopted as a road map to lead our efforts for the upcoming 5 years' time to realize the aim of a world free of mine by 2025.

This noble objective cannot be realized if not owned by all of us. Thanks to the incredible work carried out by all woman ,men and institutions across the globe to make our Convention successful .

All of you took charge of an incredible body of work in the wake of Oslo.

Every single State Party is in a position to do what it can to ensure that we get even closer to achieving our mission – an end, for all people for all time, to the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines.

In Oslo we all agreed to 50 specific commitments in the Oslo Action Plan with 81 associated indicators and pledged to translate this action plan into sustainable progress.

Assessing our progress in light of the commitments we made in Oslo is at the heart of the matter for this meeting.

On the basis of the efforts reported by the States Parties since Oslo, together with the Committees we have prepared a document on the Achieving the Aims of the Oslo Action Plan: Draft Progress Report 2019-2020 and Oslo Action Plan: status of implementation.

I hope this report will serve as a comprehensive baseline of where we are in our implementation efforts and what remains to be done in line with what has been reported by States Parties. I want to thank all those States that have submitted information and to the Committees of their excellent work. This is a live document and I am certain that we will see things move forward as we improve our reporting and further our implementation efforts.

This has been an incredibly difficult year as we have all confronted the threat of the ongoing global pandemic. But it has been incredible as well to see States Parties persevere with their implementation efforts. Allow me to commend those organizations that continue to work in support of States Parties during this time. And, importantly to those States in a position to provide assistance that have continued to lend their support. It is important that your support not only continue but is redoubled to make up for any lost time caused by the global pandemic.

Only one year since Oslo illustrates that, while we are continuing to head in the right direction, we must not become complacent:

- While stockpile destruction remains a great success story, challenges remain.
- While mine affected States Parties are progressively reporting completion of mine clearance obligations, and we will hear from two of these States Parties over the course of this meeting, this meeting will have to deal with the requests of those who have indicated that it will still take more years to complete the task.
- While great strides have been taken by States Parties to address the needs and guarantee the rights of landmine survivors, the challenges faced by these women, girls, boys and men are profound and much more needs to be done.
- While a high-level effort has been undertaken to promote further acceptance of the

Convention, we need to continue efforts to ensure that all States join this common cause and that this Convention is truly universalized.

- And in a global environment in which resources are constrained, we need to be creative about reinvigorating international cooperation in the context of the Convention.

Most importantly, we must ensure that we convert our words in concrete actions that produce meaningful results on the ground.

We are no further ahead if the words that we utter or record in our final documents serve to only place us on the moral high ground.

Let us this week, and in the weeks that follow, keep our eyes fixed on our destination and what it will actually take to get there.

Now, it is my pleasure to declare the 18MSP Open and invite the opening speakers to address the meeting.

Before I do, please allow me to pay tribute to the late Minister of Defence of Sudan Lieutenant General Gamaleldin Omer who participated in the Oslo conference and led courageously the initial efforts of peace making in Sudan and passed away on his search for peace. His efforts didn't go futile as the peace agreement has been signed and only yesterday Sudan has celebrated this occasion. May his soul rest in eternal peace.

*[Addresses by high level participants]*

As I mentioned earlier, this has certainly been a difficult year for many. .. But we have shown perseverance and we have shown commitment and we have shown empathy with one another. As united humans to fight the pandemic we have been strong. As a community to rid the world of mines we have been stronger. It is up to us to use these platforms to continue in good faith supporting our implementation efforts.

I would like to thank you all. Now, let's get started.