

**Statement by Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu
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**Eighteenth Meeting of the States Parties to the
Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention**

*Delivered by Ms. Radha Day, Chief of Service a.i.,
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I am pleased to send my most sincere greetings to all participants in this virtual Eighteenth Meeting of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

The driving humanitarian imperative behind the negotiation and adoption of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention should continue to be celebrated.

The Convention's fundamental commitment to comprehensively prohibiting a weapon type deemed unacceptable because of its humanitarian impact is truly exemplary.

We have seen this approach successfully replicated in the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The humanitarian imperative has also been pursued to enhance the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

Once widely used, anti-personnel landmines are rightly becoming relics of the past – due to a growing intolerance for such weapons that kill and maim indiscriminately.

Moreover, the Convention continues to enjoy increasing support resulting in the destruction of millions of landmines and the clearance of vast swaths of once-contaminated land.

As noted last year by the Secretary-General in his message to the Fourth Review Conference in Oslo, probably no other disarmament instrument better illustrates the concept of “Disarmament that Saves Lives”.

The success of this Convention has largely hinged upon the collaborative efforts between States, including those harshly affected by contamination, the United Nations, civil society and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

It is clear that disarmament initiatives are most successful when they involve partnerships among different stakeholders. In the midst of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the international community continues to adjust its working methods to ensure progress is made and momentum is sustained. While many aspects of our lives have been upended, we cannot afford to postpone implementation of our commitments, including assistance to landmine victims, clearance of mine-contaminated areas and destruction of stockpiles.

I commend all States Parties on the determination to not only keep the momentum, but also to encourage further efforts towards achievement of a world free from the scourge of landmines.

It is heartening to witness this unity of purpose, even in the face of such unprecedented implementation challenges and numerous restrictions in light of the global public health emergency.

As I alluded to at the outset, over the last two decades the efforts and dedication of the entire mine action community have produced commendable, tangible results:

- vast areas have been cleared of anti-personnel mines (at least 156km² in 2019¹) and thousands of innocent lives have been saved;

¹ According to the 2020 Landmine and Cluster Munitions Monitor

- suffering has been reduced, and mine victims are receiving much needed assistance, rehabilitation and reintegration;

- sustainable development has been facilitated with mine action playing a critical enabling role towards achievement of the SDGs;

- the majority of the 164 States parties to the Convention have met their article 5 obligations and 55 million stockpiled antipersonnel mines (including more than 269,000 in 2019) have thus been destroyed;

- production and transfer of anti-personnel mines have dramatically decreased.

I take this opportunity to congratulate Chile, which, this year, successfully fulfilled its article 5 obligations.

While much has been accomplished, challenges still remain on the way towards a Mine Free World, in particular:

- Millions of stockpiled antipersonnel mines still await destruction by three States parties;
- 33 States parties still have mine-contaminated areas to clear;
- The number of mine victims continues to increase with over 5,500 casualties recorded this year, mostly civilians;
- Reports of new allegations of use emerged.

The Convention's implementation machinery, although performing well, is also suffering from a lack of financial sustainability due to the outstanding contributions by some States Parties.

Thus, renewed energy and sustained commitment to achieving the goals of the Convention are required.

Last year, at the Oslo Review Conference, States Parties assessed the operation and status of the Convention and its implementation, identified challenges, and developed a forward-looking strategy to achieve further progress over the next five years. Through measurable and realistic tasks, the Oslo Action Plan sets forth a clear path forward.

The United Nations remains committed to supporting States Parties in the successful implementation of this Action Plan, although the ultimate success of the Convention rests with the States Parties.

Before concluding, allow me to reiterate the unacceptability of anti-personnel landmines.

Landmines placed decades ago continue to kill, maim and terrorize innocent civilians today. We must urgently free ourselves of this scourge.

In this spirit, I call upon all States that have not yet done so to consider acceding to the Convention at the earliest possible convenience.

Once again, I commend you for having set an exceptionally high standard for treaty compliance as well as for your commitment to a Mine Free World.

I wish you all the success at this Eighteenth Meeting of the States Parties.

Thank you.