



Statement of the Netherlands
under agenda item 7 on
General Exchange of Views
Eighteenth Meeting of States Parties of the
Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
Submitted in writing

The Netherlands would like to express its gratitude to Ambassador Osman Abufatima Adam Mohammed of Sudan and his team for their efforts chairing this year's Meeting of States Parties and the extensive preparations leading up to it. Let me assure you that you have the full support of the Netherlands' delegation.

In addition to the statement delivered by the EU, the Netherlands would like to make the following remarks in its national capacity.

We see hopeful and some worrying developments in the field of mine action today. On the one hand, we see that progress is made by countries becoming mine free, that new technologies for training purposes are developed and that advancements in victim assistance are made. On the other hand, we see some countries that were mine free being contaminated again by mines of an improvised nature, that the clearance of contaminated areas in some countries seems to have stalled and we see a non-State Party deploying anti-personnel mines in a current conflict. The Netherlands is deeply concerned about the use of anti-personnel landmines by government forces and non-state armed groups in different parts of the world, and strongly condemns their use anywhere, anytime and by any actor.

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention represents the global norm against anti-personnel mines and we strongly support the Convention. It is one of the more successful multilateral disarmament conventions. The Oslo Action plan, adopted last year at the Fourth Review Conference in Oslo, is testament to this as it provides a clear path forward for the implementation of the Convention for the coming years. The baseline assessment that is being conducted as a result of the OAP and the inclusion of clear indicators are novelties that will assist the solid implementation of the Convention.

Chile and UK Mine Free

We congratulate Chile on recently achieving the mine-free status by submitting its Declaration of Completion. Over the last twenty years, 123,421 AP-mines and 58,393 AV-

mines were cleared and it also destroyed its full stockpile. Chile made an important contribution to our common ambition to achieve a mine free world. We urge all other States Parties with remaining Article 5 mine clearance obligations to follow Chile's lead. We also congratulate the United Kingdom on the news that clearance in the Falklands has been completed. We will revert to the issue of mine clearance in more detail under agenda item 9 (b).

Universalisation

The Netherlands is hopeful that the Convention attracts continued interest. We commend the President's work on universalisation by engaging with non-States Parties with a view to them joining the Convention. Although the total number of ratifications and accessions to the Convention stands at a solid 164 States Parties, 33 states are still not party to the Convention. We urge them to follow suit. We also call upon states in the meantime to follow a self-declaratory policy of non-use.

Destruction of stockpiles anti-personnel mines

Article 4 of the Convention imposes an unmistakable obligation on states parties to destroy stockpiled anti-personnel mines as quickly as possible, but not later than four years after the entry into force of the Convention for that State Party. It is worrying that despite extensive urging by the States Parties some States Parties still hold stockpiles of anti-personnel mines well after their respective deadline and are therefore in non-compliance with Article 4 of the Convention. We call on these States Parties to bring their practices into line with the Convention without further delay.

Victim assistance

In responding to the needs of mine victims, we have come a long way. There is a growing consensus on the importance of integrating victim assistance into broader national policies, plans and legal frameworks related to the rights of persons with disabilities, health, education, employment, development and poverty reduction. However, several countries with significant numbers of mine victims lack adequate resources and require continued support to strengthen their response and meet their commitments under the Convention. The Netherlands has been an advocate of ensuring that assistance of mine victims and survivors is integrated adequately in national health systems. Furthermore, we emphasise the importance of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support as an integral part of victim assistance and we welcome its growing adoption.

Cooperation and assistance

The Netherlands supports States Parties and non-States Parties in Mine Action to achieve our shared ambition to achieve a world free of mines through our multiannual Mine Action and Cluster Munitions Programme, and other means of funding. We will revert to this issue in more detail under agenda item 9 (c).

Conclusion

Let me conclude by saying that the Netherlands is committed to working closely with all States Parties in a constructive manner in order to secure an outcome of this Meeting of States Parties that further strengthens the Convention and brings a mine free world closer. Together we can save the lives of people by ensuring their homes, land, and communities are without the threat of any mines.