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Statement by Sweden Agenda Item 7, 18th Meeting of State Parties APMBC

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Excellencies, dear colleagues,

Mr. President,

Sweden would like to take this opportunity to thank you and all those involved in the preparation of this meeting during this difficult time. We are meeting under extraordinary circumstances. The pressure put on our societies and lives by the global pandemic has been, and continues to be, immense. Sweden would like to congratulate you, Mr President, on your election and assure you of our full support. We also commend the staff of the ISU for their excellent work during this unpredictable time.

Sweden stands fully by the statement given by the EU and would like to give some brief additional information and views from a Swedish perspective.

In the shadow of the pandemic, the global security environment has continued to deteriorate, with increasing polarization and a severe lack of trust between countries. While imperilled, we have been strengthened in our conviction that multilateralism and international cooperation remains our only chance to address our many common challenges and to ensure international peace and security.

Since Sweden joined the number of states that have taken the same decision have grown to 164. That number stands as a testament to the success of this convention. As we have reached this great height, we must however remain vigilant. Success can also be a breeding ground for complacency. Our goal for a mine-free world will only be possible to achieve if our efforts are sustained. As such we welcome the Oslo Action Plan put forth at last year's review conference, and look forward to its continued implementation.

To continually strive for universalization is not only the right thing to do in order to rid ourselves of these weapons of terror once and for all, it is also a commitment all of us have made during previous review conferences and until we have reached that goal it will remain one of the most important obligations we have in our continued efforts.

Mine action is key to the realisation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as the UN Secretary General's agenda for disarmament. These instrument makes clear connections between disarmament and the sustainable development goals. Sweden believes that the national ownership and the political will of the cooperation partner countries are key to achieving sustainable development. Mine action is no exception. It needs to become an integrated part of affected States' development efforts, for example to enable agriculture and the build-up of infrastructure.

Finally, as a government with a feminist foreign policy, it is Sweden's strong conviction that applying a gender equality perspective in all aspects of arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament will help improve the functioning of our collective work and strengthen international peace and security. This extends to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, and Sweden warmly welcomes the integration and mainstreaming of gender and diversity considerations into mine action programming.