

**Second International Pledging Conference for the
Implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention**

Geneva, 28 February 2017

Statement by Belgium

Mr. President,

Let me thank you Ambassador for **hosting this Second International Pledging Conference** reflecting clearly Austria's dedication to the convention.

The principle of holding an **Annual Pledging Conference** is one of the tools that was put in place within the framework of the decision on *Strengthening financial governance and transparency within the ISU* adopted at the 14th Meeting of States parties in December 2015 under Belgian Presidency.

These conferences **remain essential** to ensure budgetary transparency, predictability and accountability, as well as to reinforce the relations between State parties and the Implementation Support Unit (ISU).

Mr. President,

Belgium remains strongly committed to the Ottawa Convention, both politically and financially. It will continue to pay particular attention to the state of health of the internal mechanisms of the Convention; a topic that was thoughtfully stressed by the Austrian Presidency in its invitation.

Mindful to ensure the future of the Convention my country contributed 330 000 EUR to the **financial security buffer** that was put in place under Belgian Presidency. This was a tangible sign of our engagement to secure the future of the Convention and to provide it with the means to reach its objective of a world free of anti-personnel landmines by 2025.

Mr. President,

We welcome the positive developments with regard to the buffer in question. We would like to thank the State parties present here today for their valued contributions to this mechanism and we encourage them to uphold their support to the Convention.

We must remain vigilant to the timely respect of financial obligations under the Convention by all State parties in order to ensure that our annual meetings can be effectively held. Those meetings are the engine of our common engagement towards the Convention. It is thus imperative that they take place. In that respect, we commend Austria for its active engagement in favor of the financial well-being of the Convention and for making that issue a priority of its Presidency.

Mr. President,

In 2016, Belgium has contributed more than 2.5 million EUR to projects related to mine actions and other unexploded ordnance in the sector of mine clearance, risk education, advocacy and victim assistance. Those projects have been confirmed in the course of 2016 and are currently being implemented.

Belgium is at this stage not in a position to announce a financial contribution to the Convention for 2017. We are however closely considering funding a number of projects relevant to the convention. Further details will be shared once decisions will have been taken and you will be informed of these decisions in due time.

I thank you Mr. President.