



Kingdom of the Netherlands

Statement of the Netherlands

delivered by

**H.E. Robbert Gabriëlse, Permanent Representative to the
Conference on Disarmament**

at

**Fourth Annual Pledging Conference
of the
Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention**

Geneva, 26 February 2019

[CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY]

Dear Mr President,

Thank you. As I am taking the floor for the first time in a formal meeting of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, I would like to congratulate you for assuming the role of president of this Convention. The Netherlands attaches great importance to this Convention and all the work in the field of Mine Action. Let me assure you that my delegation will fully support you during your tenure as president leading up to the Review Conference at the end of this year in Oslo.

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

I will focus my intervention on the financial contributions the Netherlands is making towards the success of the APMBC and conclude with a few remarks on the importance of sustainable financing of the Convention.

Firstly, the Netherlands currently runs a **multi-annual humanitarian Mine Action and Cluster Munitions support programme worth 45 million euros**, spanning the period 2016-2020. We support activities of three mine action operators, namely the Mines Advisory Group, the HALO Trust and Danish Church Aid, in 14 countries and territories, namely Afghanistan, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Kosovo, Lebanon, Libya, Mali, Palestinian Territories, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, and Yemen. The programme focuses on gender as well as innovation and includes funds up to **10 million euros for emergency response**. In this context, we are making resources available for contamination caused by Da'esh in Iraq, Syria and Libya. As conflicts are taking place more and more in urban areas, causing civilian casualties, the Ottawa community needs to adapt its approach to Mine Action. The Netherlands is ready to contribute its parts by actively addressing these issues.

We are currently developing a new high-level policy strategy on Mine Action that will form the basis for our new support programme for the period 2020-2024. We envisage the tender for this support programme, for which mine action operators can bid, will be ready in the first half of 2020. Multilateralism will be one of the pillars of our new high-level policy strategy and hence our support for the APMBC will continue.

Secondly, the Netherlands supports the **UNMAS Voluntary Trust Fund with an annual contribution of 3 million euros**. On top of that, in 2018, we provided a one-kind contribution of 3 million euros to UNMAS's activities in Afghanistan.

Thirdly, we support the **Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining** for Mine Action research, so the sector continues to be abreast of the latest developments. We support Mine Action being done in an effective, efficient and safe way.

Fourthly, and most importantly in the context of today's pledging conference, the Netherlands will continue to **support the ISU with a multi-annual contribution of 40.000 euros**, at least until 2021. Also, we will continue to support the APMBC **Sponsorship Programme with a multi-annual contribution of 10.000 euros**, at least until 2021.

To conclude, with regard to the importance of **sustainable financing** of the meetings of the Convention, we are concerned with the systemic late and non-payments that are plaguing this Convention as well. As a result, for the last three years, we had to cut one of the formal meeting days of the Meetings of States Parties. The last minutes savings we are forced to do are eventually detrimental to the functioning of this Convention.

First and foremost, we strongly urge countries to pay their contributions in full and on time. We also look forward to continue the dialogue on this issue and to closely monitor the financial situation under the guidance of the presidency in the lead up to the next Review Conference, as the final report of the 17th MSP states. This situation needs to be addressed, including through increasing transparency, so we can continue to do our work as envisaged with a view to reaching a mine free world by 2025.

Thank you Mr President.