



Kingdom of the Netherlands

**Opening remarks by the President of the 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties to the  
Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer  
of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction**

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**at the**

**The Americas as an Antipersonnel-land-mine-free-zone**

**Support for Mine Action in Peru and Ecuador**

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Excellences,

It is a great pleasure to participate in the opening of this regional dialogue. My thanks goes to the Organization of American States, Ecuador and Peru and the EU for bringing us together to discuss a matter that should be of mutual concern to all of us.

The Netherlands took on the role of President of this Convention last year with the aim of continuing to contribute to the purposeful implementation of our Convention.

This Convention is distinct, with all members and partners working with a common purpose. A purpose which is shared by all States Parties and most States, I would say, not yet party.

Simply put, most appreciate the need to rid the world of a weapon that is victim activated, does not distinguish between a civilian and a soldier, causes superfluous injuries, is long lasting, affects the livelihood of millions of peoples around the world and really has no place in today's world.

In taking on the role as President of the Convention, the Netherlands knew it was taking the helm of a successful Convention. However, its success is often also its weakness, with success sometimes blurring the fact that the Convention requires continued nourishment from all of us and that there is still an incredibly amount of work to be done. Too many injuries and deaths are caused by these weapons on an annual basis. The numbers have risen over the years and we must continue to reverse this trend.

At the Eighteenth Meeting of the States Parties, the Netherlands shared its priorities with the States Parties. We firmly believe on supporting three critical elements - capacity building, innovation, and inclusion. We believe that these are critical to ensure effective, efficient, and sustainable success.

In this regard we must:

Ensures that national authorities are equipped to take ownership of their national mine action programmes.

Continue to be innovating in our approach in meeting our objectives to look at better, more effective tools to address challenges as soon as possible.

And we must ensure that our approach is inclusive, including by:

- Ensuring that the different needs and perspectives of women, girls, boys, and men are considered and inform all areas of Convention implementation; and
- Taking into consideration the needs of mine survivors and affected communities and ensure their meaningful participation in all Convention related matters including in planning, executing, and monitoring implementation efforts.

With this said, we cannot expect progress without a shared determination and political will.

Later today and tomorrow, we will hear from Ecuador and Peru on their implementation efforts and remaining challenges. I welcome Ecuador and Peru's efforts and for sharing their progress and challenges in a transparent manner. This transparency is critical to our joint implementation efforts.

These two days should leave us with a clearer understanding of where we are in terms of clearing mines in the Americas, and how collective we could push this great continent to the brink of becoming mine-free.

Once again, thank you to all the organizers and to all of you for participating and I look forward to interacting with you on this matter throughout my Presidency.

Thank you.