

Statement by Ambassador Stefano Toscano, Director of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)

Intersessional Meetings of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Opening remarks, WMO Building, Geneva, 8 June 2017

Mr. President, allow me to join you in welcoming all participants to Geneva.

The discussions today and tomorrow will cover every aspects of the Convention and will focus on the concrete and effective means by which we can reach completion by 2025 at the latest. Let me highlight two points that, in our view, will play a substantial role in fulfilling the Maputo commitment.

1. First, more efforts are necessary to strengthen country-focused cooperation and coordination. The GICHD very much welcomes the initiative of the Presidency to foster individualized approaches. We are convinced that such approaches, together with key components thereof such as national ownership, strategic planning, transparency and donors' commitment and coordination, can go a long way towards accelerating progress on completion.

The GICHD is committed to promoting a country-focused approach. The Centre continues to allocate part of its resources towards the development and implementation of comprehensive and integrated country-support packages that are tailored to local circumstances. The Centre also encourages the sharing of knowledge and experiences between affected countries and assists in establishing and promoting suitable regional frameworks for such cooperation.

2. Second, efficient and effective operations on the ground remain key, with the implementation of the land release standard at the very heart of them. The Maputo Action Plan promotes the implementation of this approach, which fosters the application of sound risk management principles. Yesterday's event on land release gave us the opportunity to promote its universalization and to share good practices and challenges.

The GICHD remains fully involved in the promotion of land release and will continue to invest in training and advisory services to ensure its uptake and implementation.

Mr. President,

Fulfilling the Maputo commitment requests all mine action stakeholders to join forces and collaborate even more closely. This is not the time to decrease our collective engagement towards implementation of the Convention. This is the time to uphold the spirit and the enthusiasm that led to the signature of the Treaty 20 years ago, so as to turn a very significant legal advancement into a tangible and lasting reality on the ground.

Thank you.