



**13TH MEETING OF STATES PARTIES TO THE ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE BAN CONVENTION
2-5 DECEMBER 2013**

GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS

**STATEMENT BY JOSEPH BALLARD
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2 DECEMBER 2013

It is a pleasure to see you in the chair, Mr President, and you can be assured of New Zealand's full support as you guide us in our work. New Zealand would like also to record its thanks at this stage to the outgoing President, H.E. Ambassador Matjaž Kovačič of Slovenia, for his stewardship of this Convention over the last year. It has been a pleasure working with you, Ambassador.

New Zealand firmly believes in this Convention. It embodies a thoroughly modern approach to security: one that recognises that a State's choice of means of defence is not unlimited and one that places the right value on human life and livelihoods. It is an approach that blazed a trail 15 years ago, and one that will increasingly become central to all disarmament efforts.

As we approach the 15th anniversary of the Convention's entry into force and its Third Review Conference, it is appropriate for us to reflect on our achievements over those fifteen years and the challenges that we still face.

The achievements, of course, are many. This Convention has been responsible for the destruction of over 47 million anti-personnel landmines. Almost 85% of the world's States are bound by its terms – and we congratulate Poland in particular for becoming the newest member this year. The number of States identified as potential producers of anti-personnel mines has fallen by almost 80% since the Convention entered into force. Almost 2,000km² of mined areas have been released for productive use over the last decade. Financial support for mine action has reached record levels. Recorded casualties have reached new lows. And victims are receiving more support than ever before.

These achievements have been the fruit of the efforts of affected States, donors, international organisations and NGOs alike. Sometimes they have acted alone, but most often they have worked together in the partnerships that brought this treaty into being and that have come to define the way it works. It is truly an impressive record.

But our work is not complete; a number of challenges remain.

We call on those 36 States that have not yet joined the Convention to do so without any further delay. We welcome in particular the presence here of the Marshall Islands and hope that it will soon be in a position to ratify the treaty.

We condemn in the strongest terms the use of anti-personnel landmines anywhere by anyone; we have again been deeply disturbed by further reports this year of landmine use by States, both within and outside this Convention, and by non-state actors.

We encourage those States Parties with ongoing stockpile destruction and mine clearance obligations, and particularly those who have requested extensions to their deadlines, to complete that work as soon as possible.

We look forward to contributing to the realisation and implementation of a new Maputo Action Plan that will guide us as we confront these challenges over the next five years, and to this Friday's discussions on next year's Review Conference.

Finally, Mr President, on this eve of the International Day for Persons with Disabilities, we would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to all survivors of landmines, and to thank those who are joining us this week for their key contribution to realising the goals of the Convention. Their example will continue to inspire us.