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STATEMENT BY

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ON BEHALF OF THE HUMAN SECURITY NETWORK

AT THE
SIXTEENTH MEETING OF THE STATES PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON
THE PROHIBITION OF THE USE, STOCKPILING, PRODUCTION AND
TRANSFER OF ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION

VIENNA, 18– 21 DECEMBER 2017

Mr President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Human Security Network, a cross-regional Network comprising Austria, Chile, Costa Rica, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Mali, Norway, Slovenia, Switzerland, Thailand and my own country, Panama, with South Africa as an observer.

Let me start by acknowledging with gratitude the role assumed by Austria on hosting, in Vienna, the 16th Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the prohibition of the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines and on their destruction (so called Ottawa Convention) and for the efficient preparations of the meeting. We, as guests, are grateful and privileged to enjoy your hospitality.

The Human Security Network is an informal group of States that promotes the integration of the human security approach in policies and programmes at international, regional, and national levels. Although the Network played an important role in advancing the Ottawa Convention during the years, its activities expanded to cover current UN and other international agenda issues relating to human security, including disarmament, freedom from fear, freedom from want, and freedom to live in dignity.

The Human Security Network rallies around the concept of human security, which calls for a people-centered, comprehensive, context-specific and prevention-oriented approach to the challenges relating to peace and security, development and human rights. It calls for a better protection and empowerment of each individual and societies.

Mr President,

On this 20th Anniversary of the adoption and signature of the convention, we welcome the progress made over the past years and note the significance and comprehensiveness of the Ottawa Convention in the humanitarian, disarmament and development affairs. It is with concern however that we have observed that during the last two years there has been an increase in numbers of victims of mines. The Landmine monitor has reported 8.605 victims by landmines and explosive remnants of war in 2016. This new trend is becoming increasingly worrisome.

Together, we, as States Parties, look forward to advancing action on our commitments towards a world free from landmines.

We welcome Algeria as the 28th mine free country and the recent accession of Sri Lanka to the Convention.

Our work is far from finished– we must work collaboratively and efficiently to ensure that the goals of the Convention are achieved to the fullest extent possible by 2025.

It is encouraging that more and more countries are becoming mine-free and only a few States Parties have stockpiles left to destroy. In fact, 34 of 50 states that have produced anti-personnel mines are now bound by the convention. It is also important

to note that the norms that have been set by the Convention extend well beyond the framework of the States Parties and have created synergies with other related instruments promoting the security of human individuals.

Notwithstanding the success of the Ottawa convention, important challenges still remain to be addressed:

1. Implementation of Article 5, i.e. mine clearance, remains one of the most significant challenges to be addressed in the coming years. In this regard the Human Security Network highlights the urgency of remobilising the community of donors to ensure that a wide range of new resources is available to mine-affected countries so that they can fully implement Article 5.
In addition, we underline the importance of taking a comprehensive approach that addresses the social, environmental and economic consequences of mines in tandem with de-mining activities. Such an approach is fundamental to sustainable peace and development in mine-affected countries.
The Human Security Network also underlines the need for mine-affected countries to make implementation of Article 5 a national priority.
2. Despite the fact that the number of new mine victims are significantly lower today than 20 years ago and in view of the recently rising numbers of mine victims, the need for assistance has increased. Victim assistance is a long-term commitment for all victims and their families and often means lifetime care. In this regard, we highlight the importance of promoting cooperation and synergies with other international instruments, such as the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
3. Despite 162 States Parties to the Convention, universalization still remains one of the main challenges. To this end, the Human Security Network will endeavour to promote the universal acceptance of the Convention and we call upon those States that have not yet done so, to join the Convention.

The presence of mines causes tremendous humanitarian and development challenges. We remain deeply concerned that these devices continue to constitute an obstacle to the return of refugees and other displaced persons, reconstruction and economic development, humanitarian aid operations, as well as the restoration of normal social conditions. In addition, it is critical that we remember that the social and economic consequences of land mines affect a population long after conflict has ended. We bear in mind the serious threat that mines and other unexploded ordnance pose to the safety, health and lives of civilian populations, as well as personnel participating in humanitarian, peacekeeping and rehabilitation programmes and operations. That is to say, we must remember the individuals who bear the brunt of these dangerous devices, and we must consider the multifaceted ways in which their lives are affected by the presence of land mines.

Members of the Network recognise the importance of the United Nations system including the UN Mine Action Service, and other international and regional organisations including the International Campaign to Ban Landmines to assist mine-affected countries.

Mr President,

We as States Parties to the Convention, remain committed to end the human tragedy caused by anti-personnel mines through their total elimination and the goal to free the world from anti-personnel mines by 2025. We continue to be encouraged by the unprecedented manner in which the international community has rallied to end the devastation caused by landmines and we look forward to achieve, as it was mentioned before, the total elimination of landmines through our mutual cooperation.

Furthermore mainstreaming gender equality into all humanitarian mine action work is also an important aim of the Human Security Network and we would encourage all Parties to the Ottawa Convention to support the work of UNDP sponsorship programmes designed to promote gender diversity in the work of the Convention. We also highlight the importance of women's participation in disarmament discourse, and of women's agency as a positive force for change.

"We encourage all States Parties to intensify their efforts to complete their respective time-bound obligations to achieve the goal of an anti-personnel mine free world without new victims by 2025."

Thank you