

Statement by Myanmar at the 16th Meeting of the States Parties of the Convention on the Prohibition of Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction

**Mr. President,
Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,**

At the outset, on behalf of Myanmar observer delegation, I would like to express our congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the 16th Meeting of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. I believe that under your able leadership and outstanding skill, you will surely guide this meeting to a positive result.

Mr. President,

Myanmar recognizes that the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention is the cornerstone of the effort to end the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines. Despite not joining the convention yet, Myanmar supports the norms of the Convention. Myanmar Armed Forces is no longer using the landmines while safeguarding the life and property of its people in internal conflicts.

Myanmar foreign policy consistently supports disarmament and opposes arms race, production and sales. In line with this policy, we do not lose sight of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and closely follow the progressive activities related to it. Myanmar has participated in the meetings of the State Parties to the Convention and other relevant activities. Our participation in this meeting also reflects our keen interest in the work of the Convention.

Mr. President,

Myanmar has endured almost 70 years of internal armed conflicts. The greatest national endeavour for Myanmar today is to forge a lasting peace for its people. Myanmar is now in the process of reconciliation among different institutions, ethnic groups and communities.

A National Ceasefire Agreement was signed between the Myanmar armed forces and 8 ethnic armed groups in October 2015. Ceasefire includes demining. That opens the windows of opportunities for the expansion of mine actions in Myanmar.

The 1st Union Peace Conference - also known as 21st Century Panglong Conference was held in 2016. It was the most inclusive peace conference in Myanmar's history. And the second Conference took place in May 2017 and the preparation works are underway for the 3rd Union Peace Conference.

In line with progress on the peace process, all parties involved agreed to cooperate on the process of clearing all landmines. Joint efforts on landmine clearing projects shall be carried out in close consultation at different levels.

Mr. President,

Taking this opportunity, I would like to brief this meeting about the mine action activities being carried out in Myanmar.

Since 2012, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Rehabilitation, has co-chaired with UNICEF a national Mine Risk Working Group comprising 10 different ministries and 28 national and international NGOs and UN agencies to enhance coordination.

The MR Working Group provides the platform to foster common strategies and inter-agency/inter-ministerial work plan. The MRWG is complemented by two dedicated sub-technical groups on Victims Assistance and Information Management. In 2014, Kachin and Kayah States and 2016 in Kayin and Shan States, MR working groups were formed in order to decentralize coordination mechanism and better address emergency-need for IDPs and other affected communities. A two-year strategic plan was developed for 2015-2016 and revised for 2017.

The Myanmar Armed Forces is working to educate people about the danger of landmines and working together with local people to conduct humanitarian

landmine clearance activities in Kayin state. Some international organizations such as Association for Aid and Relief, Catholic Relief Services, DCA, MAG, HALO, UNHCR also implemented risk education projects, primarily in five states, and four regions. Many other organizations were listed as implementing partners.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, I would like to say that Myanmar stands ready to further cooperation with States Parties, relevant international organizations and NGOs to contribute to the reduction of civilian casualties caused by anti-personnel mines.

I thank you, Mr. President.