

## **17th Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention**

### **Statement by ESTONIA**

**26-30 November 2018, Geneva**

*Check against delivery!*

Thank you, Madame President,

Estonia fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union, but I would like to add a few remarks in our national capacity.

We are glad to note that the Ottawa Convention, which last year celebrated its 20th anniversary, has become one of the most successful international disarmament agreements as in addition to the overall good level of compliance by States Parties in its key aspects, it has brought clear results on the ground through mine clearance, victim assistance and stockpile destruction. However, we have still not achieved our goal – an anti-personnel mine free world without new victims – and the work has to continue. Estonia supports strengthening the effectiveness of the Convention, its universalisation and the implementation of the Maputo Action Plan. We agree that in order to meet the 2025 ambition, we need to carry out targeted efforts, combined with innovation and smart partnerships. We also urge all States to join the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

We recognise, that although the Ottawa Convention became an international norm quickly after its entry into force, financing its implementation has been a challenge over the past years. It is regrettable that non-payments, delayed payments and outstanding arrears have led to the shortening of the Meeting of States Parties for three consecutive years. Ahead of the Fourth Review Conference in 2019, we call on all States to pay their dues in full and on time.

Madame President,

We congratulate those States Parties, which have completed their mine clearance obligations. It is important for mine affected States Parties, which are not able to fulfil their obligations under Article 5, to indicate and submit in a timely manner a request for extension of their mine clearance deadlines. We welcome the submission of extension requests or additional information to the earlier extension request by several States Parties.

In this respect, we are pleased to see that Ukraine recently submitted the extension request given the challenges it faces as a result of Russian aggression and ongoing military conflict in the area. We reaffirm our unwavering support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders.

Madame President,

Estonia remains committed to supporting mine clearance activities to help mine affected States Parties to meet their clearance obligations under the Convention. In recent years, we have increased our contributions, including financial support to the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), as well as to clean-up of various explosive remnants of war and mine-clearance activities under bilateral and international humanitarian projects in Iraq, Mali,

Gaza, Libya, Lebanon and Afghanistan. Moreover, since 2017 Estonia has contributed to several projects for developing a humanitarian demining training system in Ukraine.

Since 2006, we have also regularly supported and gradually increased our contributions to the Ottawa Implementation Support Unit (ISU) in achieving its mandate-based targets and we continued doing so in 2018. Estonia stands ready to look further into the financing mechanisms of the ISU when the States Parties are ready to do so.

Madame President,

Let me conclude by commending you and the Presidency of Afghanistan especially for the active engagement in promoting universalisation of the Convention and express my gratitude to you as well as to the Implementation Support Unit for all the work done to ensure a successful meeting. You have my delegation's full support.

Thank you!