



## **Statement of Montenegro**

### **The Seventeenth Meeting of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention**

#### **General Exchange of Views**

**Geneva, 26-30 November 2018**

Mr. President,

At the beginning, I would like to congratulate you for assuming the Presidency of the Seventeenth Meeting of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and wish you successful outcome of this meeting. Let me also thank all Committee members and the Implementation Support Unit for their hard working.

Montenegro has aligned itself with the statements to be delivered by the European Union. Please allow me to point out certain elements in my national capacity.

Mr. President,

More than 20 years Ottawa Convention is a cornerstone of the international humanitarian law, one of the greatest multilateral disarmament achievements ever and it is an indispensable international instrument. Its impressive results on the ground are the reason of saving of many thousands of human lives, numerous countries that were previously contaminated are now mine-free, more than 53 million stockpiled mines have been destroyed, victims' needs are better and more systematically addressed. The great success of the Convention has been the overall outstanding level of compliance of States Parties with the key provisions but also following its norms by some non-State Parties.

Montenegro strongly advocates for the universalization of the Convention and underlines the need of the acceleration of progress towards that direction. We express our voice of support to the Presidency of the Convention and the High Level Task Force in their efforts to engage non-States Parties at political level and all international projects aimed at encouraging them to join the Convention. We welcome with appreciation continuous efforts of civil society towards universalization and effective implementation of the Ottawa Convention.

We are convinced that full and effective implementation of the 2014 Maputo Action Plan is the only path towards goal of achieving a world free of anti-personnel mines and without victims by 2025.

We would like to use this opportunity to strongly condemn the use, manufacture, trade and transfer of anti-personnel mines, by state and non-state actors. We share concerns related to the use of anti-personnel mines for terrorism.

The elimination of all stockpiled anti-personnel mines will contribute greatly to preventing additional suffering and casualties caused by these weapons. In this regard we call all States with existing stockpiles of anti-personal mines to responsibly work towards their complete destruction, respecting the deadlines.

The reason of our deep concern are humanitarian and development challenges caused by the presence of mines and other unexploded ordnance. These devices continue to constitute an obstacle to the return of refugees and other displaced persons, humanitarian aid operations, reconstruction and economic development, as well as the restoration of normal social conditions. In that regard the implementation of Article 5 and mine clearance remains the crucial challenge to be addressed in the coming years. We also recognize the importance of mobilising of donors to secure new resources available for mine-affected countries in order to fully implement their obligations.

For the countries not having sufficient own capacities for effective implementation of the Convention international cooperation and assistance is of the utmost importance. Transparency and the exchange of information is important element for building mutual trust between the State Parties.

Mr. President,

Victim Assistance is a particularly important part of the Convention. The needs of injured are multiple and very demanding. It is our common obligation to do all necessary actions for decent life of victims and provide for them life-long care, through integrating victim assistance into broader national policies, legal frameworks related to the rights of persons with disabilities, health, education, employment, development and poverty reduction. We commend the activities of the European Union and a number of States Parties individually in this field.

Mr. President,

Montenegro is firmly committed to the implementation of the Ottawa Convention and we are in the full compliance with its provisions. There are no known minefields in the territory of Montenegro, nor groups of anti-personnel mines. In our possession there are no anti-personnel mines prohibited by international documents. Our determination is to timely perform our financial and reporting obligations.

In the end, we declare that we will continue to give our support towards universalization and full implementation of the Convention at the global level.

Thank you.