

Statement delivered by
Ambassador Stefano Toscano, Director, GICHD

*First International Pledging Conference for the Implementation
of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention*

2 March 2016

Distinguished ministers
Excellencies
Ladies and gentlemen

Mine action has been a success story over the last two decades. On the ground, more and more States Parties manage to reduce the impact of anti-personnel mines and to improve the livelihoods of affected communities. These achievements are testimony to the high significance of the Ottawa Convention.

Much remains to be done. Universalisation and full implementation of the Convention remain critical endeavours; 30 States Parties still need to fulfil their clearance obligations. Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on convening this first ever Pledging Conference for the implementation of the Convention – an event that will help mobilize the much needed continued political and financial support.

Having been created in 1998, in the wake of the signing ceremony of the Convention, the GICHD has its roots in the treaty. Ever since, we have supported its implementation and are committed to doing so in the future as well, mainly on 3 fronts:

Support to States Parties in fulfilling their obligations

First, the GICHD will continue to assist States Parties in their efforts to achieve the Maputo commitment of a mine-free world by 2025. We will continue to help affected States Parties develop their capacities to obtain clarity on the extent of contamination, draft strategies that are realistic, measurable and sustainable, release land effectively, and use the most appropriate clearance methods and tools. The GICHD Strategy 2015-2018 fully reflects our commitment towards the timely fulfillment of Convention obligations.

Support to the implementation machinery of the Convention

Second, the GICHD will continue to support the implementation machinery of the Convention. We are honored to host and cooperate with the Implementation Support Unit of the Convention. This institutional arrangement has proven mutually beneficial and we look forward to strengthening our cooperation even further, in the interest of steady progress towards full implementation of the Convention.

We will also continue to support the ISU administratively by managing its Trust Funds, administering the Sponsorship Programme and providing conference management support for the organisation of the Intersessional Meetings.

Support to the development of the mine action sector

Third, the GICHD is – as per its mandate – at the cutting-edge of the development of standards, methods and tools. We remain committed to making mine action ever more relevant, productive and sustainable, to the benefit of the affected populations. There is still much room for improvement, not least thanks to the continued amazing advancements in science and technology: For instance, together with partners, we have recently developed a new system to equip free-running mine detection dogs with GPS. This new system has the potential to increase considerably the efficiency and speed of land release.

Finally, I am pleased to announce the launch by the GICHD of a worldwide awareness campaign, a campaign that will lead up to the Mine Awareness Day on April 4. It is very simple: please show your commitment to a mine-free world by the simple action of taking a picture with this red triangle (show triangle) and of posting the picture on social media. The triangle and all the information can be found on the website togetheragainstmines.org.

The job isn't done yet. Let's join our forces for the last stretch, let's work together – "together against mines".

Thank you, Mr. President.