



EU Statement
Third International Pledging Conference for the
Implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
Geneva, 27 February 2018

Madam President,

1. I would like to express the European Union's appreciation for your leadership in convening the Third International Pledging Conference here today. The yearly conferences have become an important occasion to mobilise financial resources for a solid implementation of the Ottawa Convention objectives and to renew and strengthen our collective commitments for cooperation and assistance with regard to mine action.

2. The EU and its Member States have a long history of support for mine action. Between 2012 and 2016, EU institutions contracted mine action projects in 33 affected countries in Latin America, Europe, Africa and Asia, in the value of nearly 300 million euros. Mine action projects funded by EU Member States amounted to another 300 million euros, bringing the EU's total funding to 600 million euros in 2012-2016. Our commitment is illustrated by an upward trend in EU mine action funding for the second year in a row.

3. Two weeks ago, at the 21st International Meeting of Mine Action National Programme Directors and UN Advisers in Geneva, our representatives presented a new brochure that gives an overview of EU support for mine action across the world. Some copies of this publication are available in the back of the room for interested delegates and the brochure is also available online (https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/brochure_1.pdf).

4. As illustrated in the brochure, the EU projects cover the whole scope of mine action: clearance, stockpile destruction, victim assistance, risk education, advocacy and capacity building. They are implemented by several operators and in different partnership constructions, customised to the particular needs of each affected country. Apart from mine action proper, the EU also supports affected States to set up or update national mine action strategies and operational clearance plans, in cooperation and partnership with the UN and other donors and actors.

5. In our view, national ownership is a key prerequisite for effective mine action. Effective mine action is best served by a comprehensive, up-to-date and broadly supported national mine action plan or strategy. Such a plan or strategy that has been developed by the Government and the national mine action centre, in dialogue with donors, the UN, civil society and the implementing agencies, will help coordinate mine action efforts and maximise the impact of our actions. In this context, we commend the efforts of the Committee on Enhancing Cooperation and Assistance of the Ottawa Convention for actively promoting the Individualised Approach.

6. Ensuring national ownership takes a lot of know-how and capacity and also here donors can play an important supporting role. On this particular topic, the EU sponsored a regional seminar in Bangkok last March in the context of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The seminar discussed the "country coalition concept" that puts forward a model where an affected country partners with a donor country and the UN in order to approach other donors and operators. We encourage all relevant stakeholders to pursue such models of cooperation.

Madam President,

7. Let me also express our appreciation for the work carried out by the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) of the Ottawa Convention which continues to benefit from EU funding. The EU Council Decision, adopted by our Foreign Ministers last August, supports the ISU in assisting States Parties to implement the Convention and promoting its universalisation. Thanks to the EU's financial support, the ISU has been able to recruit a staff member devoted to the implementation of the EU Council Decision with the aim to facilitate national stakeholder dialogues in the field of mine clearance and victim assistance. This Decision, worth of 2.3 million euros, is another illustration of the EU's commitment to building partnerships.

8. Furthermore, the EU and its Member States welcome the successful implementation of the decision on strengthening financial governance and transparency within the ISU, which will allow the ISU to recruit an additional staff member dedicated to victim assistance. More generally, we encourage States Parties and other stakeholders to avoid a further decline in the portion of funding that goes to victim assistance given the increase in the number of victims in recent years.

9. To conclude, Madam President, the EU is fully committed to supporting the implementation of the Ottawa Convention and the vision of a landmine free world by 2025. Our Convention is a success story that shows what multilateral arms control and disarmament are capable of. But we will need to increase our efforts if we want to preserve the norm and realise its promise.

Thank you, Madam President