

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

**Geneva, 26 February 2019**

**Statement by the Kingdom of Belgium**

Mr. President,

Let me first thank you for **hosting this Fourth International Pledging Conference** for the implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. My delegation would also like to thank Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Audun Halvorsen for his presence with us today and for Norway's outstanding dedication to the APMBC.

Our appreciation goes as well to the **ISU** and to the **coordinator of the sponsorship program** for their useful presentations.

Mr. President,

The principle of holding an **Annual Pledging Conference** is one of the tools that was put in place within the framework of the decision on *Strengthening financial governance and transparency within the ISU* adopted at the 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States parties in December 2015 under Belgian Presidency. This tool **remains essential** to ensure the budgetary predictability, transparency and accountability of the Implementation Support Unit, as well as to reinforce the relations between State parties and the ISU.

As you know, Belgium was a pioneer in the fight against anti-personnel mines and our **commitment** to the APMBC has been unwavering since the birth of the Convention, both in political as well as in financial terms.

Belgium has been an active member of the **Committee on Victim Assistance** for the last four years. Last year, we stepped up our political engagement by chairing the Committee's work with the aim to advance victim assistance and to raise awareness on the importance of addressing the needs and guaranteeing the rights

of mine victims. Under our Presidency, the Committee reinforced its cooperation with key partners from the disarmament, health, human rights and disability sectors, as well as its support to affected States by relaunching the “Victim Assistance Experts Meeting” which we co-financed.

From a **financial point of view**, my country will continue to pay particular attention to the state of health of the internal mechanisms of the Convention. Mindful to ensure the future of the Convention, Belgium contributed **330 000 EUR** to the **financial security buffer** that was put in place under its Presidency. This was a tangible sign of our engagement to secure the future of the Convention and to provide it with the means to reach its objective of a world free of anti-personnel landmines by 2025.

We thus welcome again the fact that the financial buffer reached its intended level (of an amount equivalent to one-year of ISU expenditures related to core support) last year. In this time of financial uncertainty in disarmament Conventions, the buffer provides the ISU with sustainable budgetary stability and predictability.

With regard to the financing of the Convention, we must remain vigilant to the timely respect by all State parties of their **financial obligations** to ensure that our annual meetings can be effectively held. Those meetings are the engine of our common engagement towards the Convention.

Mr. President,

Belgium has, in recent years, stepped up its financial engagement in the sector of mine clearance, mine risk education, advocacy and, of course, victim assistance.

In 2017, Belgium contributed nearly a million EUR to projects related to mine clearance, mine risk education, advocacy, and victim assistance in Myanmar, Iraq, Afghanistan and Palau. My country also financed global programs of Humanity and Inclusion (Handicap International) and ICRC appeals containing mine action activities in various countries.

In 2018, Belgium has contributed 60,000 EUR to ICBL-CMC to promote advocacy, victim assistance, and research in affected countries, 150,000 EUR to APOPO for survey and clearance of the Preah Vihear site in Cambodia, 150,000 EUR to Halo Trust for humanitarian mine clearance in Ukraine, 150,000 EUR to MAG for a mixed small arms and light weapons and explosive remnants of war awareness raising project in Mali, 150,000 EUR for Humanity and Inclusion (Handicap International) for victim assistance and clearance in Colombia and 500,000 EUR to the ICRC's mine action program in Irak. A contribution of 150,000 EUR to Halo Trust for survey and mine risk education in Syria is also under review after developments in the field.

Belgium attaches specific attention to the promotion of innovation in humanitarian work. In 2018, Humanity & Inclusion (Handicap International) received 1,5 million EUR for a project directed at accelerating land release for the local Chadian population with the help of drone-led survey techniques. In 2017, the same organization was granted 700.000 EUR to implement a project of 3D prostheses printing in Africa (through the African Organization for the Development of Centers for Disabled People).

For 2019, Belgium is considering funding a number of projects relevant to the Convention, but is, at this stage and for internal political reasons, not in a position to announce specific financial contribution to the ISU or the Convention. Further details will be shared once decisions have been taken and you will be informed of these decisions in due time.

We would like to thank all State Parties that have contributed to the ISU to this point as well as the States represented here today for their valued renewed contributions to this mechanism. We encourage them to uphold their support to the Convention.

I thank you.