



Statement by H.E. Audun Halvorsen, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway, to the pledging Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. February 26, 2019, Geneva

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention is one of the most successful multilateral disarmament treaties of recent times. We are 164 States Parties and a thriving network of international organizations and civil society actors who work towards the shared goal of a mine free world. In addition to being the first convention to recognize the rights of victims, the Convention has established a strong norm against *any* use of landmines - a norm that is followed by many more than just the States Parties.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention. We are honored that the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention will return to Oslo - where its text was adopted 22 years ago - for the fourth Review Conference in November this year.

Norway has been a strong supporter of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention since even before it was adopted in Oslo in 1997. We have consistently been among the top five donors to global mine action for more than twenty years. Today, we support mine action in 19 countries around the world. In 2018, our support for mine action was around 38 million US dollars. We intend to continue our support for survey, clearance, mine risk education and victim assistance, because as we all know, the job is not done yet.

Over the past two decades, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention has been a formidable tool to protect men, women, girls and boys. Unfortunately we do not know exactly how many lives the Convention has saved, but we do know that the number is potentially formidable. When more than 51 million stockpiled landmines have been destroyed, this means that these mines will never hurt a civilian. So each landmine destroyed represents a potential life or limb saved. Vast areas of land have been successfully cleared, and more land is freed from mines every day around the world.

Mine Action is not only about clearing areas from the danger of landmines. It is about giving children the chance to walk to school without the fear of losing their life. It is about giving a farmer the chance to farm his or her land to provide for their family, without the risk of losing a limb. It is about allowing communities to benefit from development.

There is little doubt that our joint efforts over the past 20 years has had great effects. I know many countries represented in this room are staunch supporters of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and that many of you contribute to global mine action either through



financial support or technical capacity building. We value all contributions to mine action, because we still have much work to do. As long as landmines are in the ground, they will continue to kill and maim. And even when we succeed in clearing all mines, destroying all stockpiles, landmine survivors will still have to live with the legacy of landmines for the rest of their lives. In other words: To be able to reach our goal of a mine-free world by 2025, we must redouble our efforts and speed-up the pace of survey and clearance worldwide.

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Challenges still remain. In 2017, landmines and explosive remnants of war caused more than 7000 registered deaths and injuries. Each victim is one too many. These stark numbers remind us that landmines are sadly not a problem of the past. Over the past few years, improvised landmines have again been used as tools of war, mostly by armed non-state actors. While improvised landmines themselves are not a new concept, the scale of the problem is. We must jointly address this challenge so that we can effectively protect civilians from the threat of landmines.

New use of landmines and rising numbers of casualties clearly show that we need renewed political attention and support to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and to mine action. The objectives of the Convention - to save lives, protect civilians, assist victims and to enable sustainable development in affected areas - are as relevant as ever.

The Maputo goal of a mine free world by 2025 remains our objective and rallying cry. Norway wishes to use our presidency to refocus our efforts to achieve this goal to the greatest extent possible. An important priority for us it to bring *protection* back to the center of our work. At the end of the day, mine action is essentially about protecting civilians.

I would like to thank you all for your commitment to the Convention, and I look forward to welcoming you in Oslo in November.

Thank you.