



20 years of effective humanitarian disarmament commemorated in Geneva

Geneva, Oslo 17 February 2019 – Over 40 delegations of States and international and non-governmental organisations are expected to attend the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Pledging Conference to take place Tuesday, 26 February 2019, 13:00-15:00, at Room XI at the United Nations Office at Geneva. The Pledging Conference will be opened by **H.E. Audun Halvorsen, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway** and chaired by the Convention President H.E. Hans Brattskar Ambassador of Norway to the UN in Geneva.

The Conference, which seeks to secure funds for the operation of the Convention machinery and the Sponsorship Programme is also an opportunity for States to announce contributions to mine action especially as the international community seeks to accelerate their efforts to meet their ambition of a mine-free world by 2025.

“The Sponsorship Programme is essential to the work of the Convention. It enables participation in the meetings of the Convention and direct interaction by capital and field-based experts from States Parties with limited means. This Conference is also an opportunity for States in a position to do so, to convey their support to mine action,” said Ambassador Brattskar. “Mine Action remains at the core of Norway’s humanitarian efforts and it has been so for the past 25 years. We are proud to be among the world’s top five donors to mine action and currently fund mine action in 18 countries across the world,” added the Convention President.

New use of anti-personnel mines, including of an improvised nature, is limited to a handful of countries where primarily non-state armed groups use them. The number of victims however, has grown these past few years.

Geneva commemorates 20 years of the Convention

The Conference takes place only two days before the Convention kicks-off events commemorating 20 years since it entered into force. Various events will take place in Geneva starting on 1 March and for the remainder of the year. On 1 March, the iconic Jet d’eau will be coloured blue for the occasion and as a stark reminder of the toll anti-personnel mines continue to take on civilian populations in mine affected countries. The 140m-tall pen fountain structure is only illuminated a few times each year to mark major humanitarian occasions. Convention flags will also be flown over the Mont-Blanc Bridge that day.

“We are thankful to the City of Geneva and its residents for their altruistic spirit, their continued support to the humanitarian means of the Convention, and willingness to remind the world from this capital of peace of the many victims still caused by these weapons and our collective intent to achieve a mine-free world,” added the Ambassador.

Press note: Geneva hosts various iconic monuments recalling the wish of the international community to eliminate these weapons and provide assistance to its victims including: the Broken Chair in front of the UN built to ask States to sign the Convention in 1997; the *Sablier du Millénium* (giant hourglass timer) first conceived in 1999 to mark the passage to the new millennium and icon of the Second Meeting of the States Parties now housed at the Château de Penthes; the graffiti art mural *Stop the Mines* by artists Serval, Jazi and Jag in Plainpalais commissioned for the Seventh Meeting of the States Parties. In addition, Geneva hosts several organisations that lead the fight against anti-personnel mines and provide assistance to victims including the Convention’s secretariat, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, the International Committee of the Red Cross, Humanity and Inclusion, Swiss Foundation for Demining, Appel de Genève and the UN Mine Action Service and Office for Disarmament Affairs.