

**Fifteenth Meeting of State Parties of the
Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
Santiago, 28 November 2016**

**Statement by Sachi Claringbould, First Secretary at the Permanent
Representation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Conference on
Disarmament**

[Introduction]

Thank you Madam Chair. First of all The Netherlands would like to compliment you for your extensive preparations and your government's generosity in hosting this Meeting in Santiago and to make it happen. Let me assure you that you have the full support of the Netherlands' delegation in making this Meeting a success.

The Netherlands aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union. The longer, full version of our statement will be made available for the website. It will include remarks on article 5 implementation (mine clearance) and cooperation and assistance, including the Netherlands' multiannual programme on Mine Action worth EUR 45 million.

Coming year it will be 20 years since the *Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention* entered into force. Significant progress has been made to rid the world of anti-personnel mines that cause so much human suffering and are a lethal barrier to development and post-conflict reconstruction.

[Trends - progress]

We are seeing developments in reaching the status of 'mine free country' by more State Parties the coming years but also an alarming increase of casualties, the highest number since 2006. A worrying intensive use of improvised landmines is observed in countries in the Middle East. In addition funding has decreased to the lowest level since 2005. The Netherlands believes that these are challenges that are not easily met, but should certainly be dealt with urgently and in a comprehensive manner.

The Netherlands is deeply concerned about the use of anti-personnel landmines by government forces of Myanmar, North Korea and Syria and non-state armed groups in Afghanistan, Colombia, Iraq, Libya, Myanmar, Nigeria, Pakistan, Syria, Ukraine and Yemen and the great safety threats this causes for civilians. The use disrupts human security and socio-economic development.

[Use of IEDs / improvised mines by non-state armed groups]

In particular the Netherlands wants to mention its strong concern about the use of improvised landmines and boobytraps by Da'esh. Improvised landmines and boobytraps pose a great risk to internally displaced people in countries like Syria, Iraq and Libya and for those wishing to return home. Civil-military cooperation is needed to clear not only military strategic positions but also houses, schools and markets so civilians can resume their lives again. The Netherlands is therefore pleased to chair and participate in a side-event hosted by GICHD and the Mines Advisory Group this Wednesday on IEDs and improvised landmines.

[Mine clearance – Article 5 implementation]

The Netherlands is a staunch advocate of the ambition expressed in Maputo to reach a mine-free world in 2025 to end the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines for all people for all time and to end the era of anti-personnel mines.

The Netherlands emphasizes the importance of compliance with article 5 (destruction of anti-personnel mines in mined areas) and encourages States Parties that cannot meet their obligations to use the possibilities afforded under this Convention, such as article 5 (3). The Netherlands believes this is important also with a view to the integrity of the Convention.

[Financial situation Convention]

The Netherlands shares the concern shared by others, and not least by the hosting country and chair, whether this Meeting could take place at all because of the financial situation of the Convention. First of all, the Netherlands believes it important that State Parties and Observers pay their contribution in time, well in advance of the meetings. Therefore we welcome the proposal of the chair to discuss this later this week. At the same time the Netherlands welcomes an official agenda item on financial issues in order to increase transparency on this manner so it encourages State Parties to pay their dues in time. Also, we would like to encourage the UN, together with the ISU, to make sure the billing practices are transparent, simple and on time.

[Cooperation and Assistance]

On cooperation and assistance, the Netherlands stresses the importance of individual tailor made approaches to clearance in order to meet the obligation under article 5. When we work together as affected country, operators, donors and other stakeholders and focus on what is needed to reach the deadlines, how to meet 'demand & supply' so to speak, we will be able to reach the deadlines quicker and rid countries of these mines and improve human security.

The Netherlands wishes to support States Parties and non-States Parties in Mine Action to achieve our shared ambition to reach a world free of mines by 2025 through our multiannual *Mine Action and Cluster Munitions Programme*. The Programme was renewed this year for another 4 years and the NL supports Mine Action in Afghanistan, Colombia, Occupied Palestinian Territories, Somalia, Syria, Kosovo, Ukraine, South-Sudan, DRC, Iraq, Libya and Mali through our partners Mines Advisory Group, the HALO Trust and Danish Church Aid. Furthermore the Netherlands supports UNMAS work worldwide through contributing to the Voluntary Trust Fund, specifically for UNMAS work in Iraq. Our embassies are actively involved to support Mine Action. The Netherlands focuses special attention on Gender in Mine Action. UN Resolution 1325, emphasizes: "*the need for all parties to ensure that mine clearance and mine awareness programmes take into account the special needs of women and girls*". In order to understand what the *special needs* are, there is a need to analyse and to know what the difference in male and female roles are in the society as also the difference in control over resources. Mainstreaming Gender (in programming) leads to safety and better outputs in Mine Action and effective Mine Action Programmes that includes all people.

Multi-annual planning of financing is important to enable implementers to operate in a cost-effective way and to achieve better results. The Netherlands calls on other States Parties to implement multi-annual programmes to reach our goal for 2025 in the most efficient way.

Madam Chair,

Let me conclude by saying that the Netherlands is committed to working closely with all States Parties in a constructive manner in order to secure an outcome of this Meeting of States Parties that further strengthens the Convention and brings a mine free world closer.