

STATEMENT

**by H.E. Serhii Shutenko, Head of the Delegation of Ukraine,
at the 15th Meeting of the States-Parties to the Convention on the
Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of
Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction**

Santiago, November 28, 2016

Madam President,

Distinguished participants of the meeting,

First of all I would like to thank the Government of Chile for the warm welcome and high level of organization of the Fifteenth Meeting of the State Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Production, Stockpiling and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Landmines and on their Destruction.

Ukraine aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union. Now let me make some remarks in my national capacity.

I would like to reiterate that Ukraine fully supports the aspirations of the like-minded states to overcome the humanitarian crisis caused by a large-scale proliferation and indiscriminate use of anti-personnel land mines and also wishes to see the world free of this type of weapons.

Madam President,

By acceding to the Ottawa Convention Ukraine committed itself to get rid of the existing at that time APL stockpiles on the Ukrainian territory. It was about the destruction of more than 6 million anti-personnel land mines. This amount was definitely outstanding. Ukraine has been making a constant progress in this regard ever since. Even despite current significant challenges in the security field related to the "hybrid" war waged by the Russian Federation against our country, Ukraine fully complies with its obligations under the Convention – only in 2016 more than 500 thousand anti-personnel mines were destroyed in Ukraine. Moreover, in such difficult times for our country we still manage to direct funds from the state budget to the purpose of APLs destruction.

We strongly believe that universalization of the Convention is one of the key elements to ensure full and complete implementation of its goals. Ukraine has been constantly supporting the UNGA Resolution on the Implementation of the Ottawa

Convention as a clear appeal in the UN format for the accession to the Convention by those states which have not yet done so.

Unfortunately nowadays in the wake of the armed aggression of the Russian Federation (which is not a party to the Convention) and operations of Russian-terrorist groups in the East of our country, Ukraine has to deal with a drastically increased number of explosives including antipersonnel mines causing severe casualties among civilians. These APLs which have indiscriminate effect are planted by illegal armed groups in residential areas and routes of communication between inhabited localities in violation of the Ottawa as well as CCW and Geneva Conventions which poses more threat to the civil population than to military personnel.

In less than three years 537 civilians including 68 children were injured and died from booby-traps and landmines in the East of Ukraine. Moreover, about 14 thousand persons including more than 100 children applied to the hospitals as a result of suffered injuries.

Madam President,

The most important point about the implementation of Ottawa Convention is that it is saving the lives of people. With the deep understanding of this fact Ukraine has been conducting demining on the liberated territories. Ukrainian field engineers conduct demining operations sometimes even under the fire from Russian military troops and Russia-backed terrorists. To give you an idea of the scale of this activity I would like to tell you that Ukrainian deminers have cleared 200 square kilometers.

However, to continue this task we need all possible financial and technical assistance. In this regard we appreciate the recent decision of Slovakia to be the lead nation in the respective NATO Trust Fund.

Among key priorities of Ukrainian government is mine-risk education and victim assistance. UN mine action sub-cluster in Ukraine is about to finalize the new Mine victim questionnaire. It is really important that this document is being prepared by UNISEF representation in Ukraine together with real actors in this field such as MOD, Ministry of health, Ministry of social policy, State emergency service, MFA as well as nongovernmental organizations such as ICRC (International Committee of

Red Cross), Halo Trust, DDG (Danish Demining Group) FSD (*Swiss Foundation for Mine Action*). We have comprehensive mine risk education programs. They are under constant improvement according to new developments which take place every day.

Madam President,

We are determined to continue destructing existing APL stockpiles. Once control over the whole territory of our country is restored we will proceed promptly with clearance of mined areas. Currently it is not possible even to identify all areas in which antipersonnel mines are known or suspected to be emplaced in Ukraine

Let me stress once again that Ukraine has been and always will be a responsible and reliable international partner respecting all international norms and obligations.

In conclusion I would like to draw your attention to the fact that Ottawa Convention appeared as a synergy between the aspiration of the peoples of the world and international law. This principle should remain unchanged, which means that real live situation must be a priority.

Thank you.