



First International Pledging Conference for the Implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention: "The Last Stretch"

Statement by

H.E. Henk Cor van der Kwast

Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Conference on Disarmament and Disarmament Ambassador at large

Geneva, 2 March 2016

Thank you Madame President,

Allow me first to compliment you with the organization of this pledging conference. I remember that when you launched the idea of a pledging conference several colleagues were cynical and doubted whether there would be enough interest. Today the room is full with ministers and ambassadors eager to pledge.

What a difference a year makes! Last year at this time we were discussing about the future and financial sustainability of the APLC ISU. Under the Belgian Presidency plans were developed to improve the financial basis of the ISU. Although this was not an easy process, today we see the result.

The ISU was and is playing a central role in the implementation of the Convention and the Maputo action plan. The ISU has done and is doing a tremendous job in assisting the President, the Coordination Committee, and most importantly states parties that request assistance. We also strongly believe that the ISU has an important role to play to be able to reach our common goal of a world free of anti-personnel mines in 2025.

The Netherlands has been a staunch supporter of the ISU over the years – also financially.

And it was on Monday that my Minister announced in the Council Chamber that the Netherlands will also contribute 50.000 euros to the ISU in 2016.

He symbolically handed an envelope with the Netherlands pledge to you Madame President.

Today, I am happy to add to this pledge that we have reserved 50.000 euros per year for the following five years as a contribution to the ISU, amounting to 250.000 euros in 5 years.

Madame President,

The Netherlands, as the fifth largest donor in humanitarian demining, remains fully committed to our common goal of 2025.

Under the current multiyear programme, which will end this year, subsidies have been given to Dan Church Aid, HALO Trust, Handicap International and MAG. We have funded mine related activities in 11 countries.

To underline our commitment, we have recently earmarked 45 million euros to continue our 'humanitarian action and cluster munition programme' for demining operations for the coming four years. The list of countries has not been finalized yet, but we will continue with multiyear donations.

Thank you Madame President.