



**Opening remarks by Mr. Michael Møller
United Nations Under-Secretary-General
Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal
Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General to the Conference**

**First International Pledging Conference for the Implementation of the Anti-
Personnel Mine Ban Convention: A Mine Free World by 2025: The Last Stretch
Palais des Nations, Room XXV
Wednesday, 2 March 2016 from 3:00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m.**

Minister Muñoz

Mr. Annan,

Ministers,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen:

**It is my great pleasure to be with you today for the opening of
the 1st International Pledging Conference for the
Implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.**

**Let me at the outset particularly thank Chile which holds the
Presidency of the 15th Meeting of States Parties to the
Convention for organizing this important event.**

**Having entered into force in 1999, the Ottawa Convention
today is ratified or acceded to by 162 States, including most of
the States that at one time used, stockpiled, produced or**

transferred anti-personnel mines. We have made important headway in destroying stockpiled anti-personnel mines, clearing mined areas and providing victim assistance.

The Maputo Review Conference in June 2014 testified to the progress made. Yet, despite significant improvements, we now need to make greater effort to clear the last stretch to a mine free world. In Maputo, States Parties committed to implementing a number of time-bound obligations by 2025. They made a collective call to ensuring that there were no new mine victims in areas under their control and that survivors could participate equally in their societies. The challenge now is to keep up the momentum, to raise the resources needed to implement those calls. We are indeed at an important crossroads which requires stronger political will and additional resources for the last stretch.

I thank you, the participants of this event, for coming together in such great numbers today to present your pledges that will help us to cover that last stretch together, on the road to a mine free world. In its latest resolution on Assistance in Mine Action (December 2015), the General Assembly urged all States to support mine-affected States by providing “reliable, predictable, timely and, where possible, multi-annual

contributions for mine action activities”. Today we can show our commitment to putting this resolution into practice. Every effort is welcome. Every contribution is worthwhile, because investing in mine action means investing in sustainable development and in the future. Development cannot be achieved unless the problem of landmines and explosive ordonances is resolved. Explosive remnants of war prevent farmers from cultivating their land and deprive people of their livelihoods. They prevent hospitals from being rebuilt and children from reaching their schools safely. They hinder the delivery of humanitarian relief and the safe deployment of peacekeeping operations. Demining seen in its broader dimension becomes an issue of peace, rights and wellbeing of the people living in areas of current or past conflict.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are all very pleased that you have come together to hold this important event. International Geneva has a good tradition in supporting mine action. It is a prominent host of organisations engaged in the practical implementation of mine action activities. UNMAS as a coordinator for mine action has an important office here. Geneva is also the city where most of the meetings and conferences on mine action take place. Every year, the United Nations in Geneva hosts meetings of States Parties’ to the

Ottawa Convention as well as to other treaties such as the Convention on Cluster Munitions, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Geneva-based actors have contributed to the negotiation of mine action standards on stockpile destruction, demining, mine risk education, victim assistance and advocacy. These standards facilitate coordination with the humanitarian and development programmes, as well as with peacekeeping and peace support operations. Indeed, mine action is a vivid example of how work done by actors based here in this city has a concrete impact on people's lives around the world.

Ladies and gentlemen, demining is a key priority for the United Nations. We stand ready to support your efforts to achieve a mine free world. In this endeavour we also count on our strong partners. The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention is the product of a unique partnership between states, international organizations and civil society. Outstanding advocates, including civil society representatives and well-known public figures, have driven the adoption of this Convention as well as its implementation. We need to build on this unique spirit of cooperation among all stakeholders to achieve a mine free world.

Outside our gates here at the UN in Geneva, the broken chair on the Place des Nations is a vivid reminder of the impact of land mines on people's lives. I fervently hope that one day the broken chair will remain as a symbol of distant history. For that to happen, we need to clear the last stretch.

I thank you and I wish you success in your deliberations!