

18th Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and Their Destruction

Geneva, 16 to 20 November 2020

(full statement)

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Republic of Korea is pleased to attend the 18th Meeting of the States Parties to the Ottawa Convention.

While the Republic of Korea, in light of the Korean Peninsula's unique security situation, is unable to accede to the convention at this point, we, nevertheless, support the Ottawa Convention's objectives and purposes and sympathize with the international community's concern over the severe challenges caused by the indiscriminate use of anti-personnel mines.

In this regard, we wish to elaborate various efforts that the Republic of Korea has been making at the domestic and international level to mitigate the suffering caused by anti-personnel mines.

First, we have been clearing anti-personnel mines where possible in a steady manner. In addition, we enacted the "*Special Act on the Support for Mine Victims*" in 2014 to assist mine victims and their bereaved family members.

As a part of its contribution to support global efforts, the Republic of Korea has been maintaining a moratorium on the export of anti-personnel mines since 1995 and announced its indefinite extension at the 52nd United Nations General Assembly in 1997.

In addition, as a party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its Amended Protocol II, the Republic of Korea is taking an active part in a range of discussions and activities to ensure limited and responsible use of mines.

Furthermore, the Government of the Republic of Korea has contributed more than 40 million U.S. dollars to over 25 countries since 1993 bilaterally as well as through relevant United Nations programs for de-mining and victim assistance, including the UN Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action and the International Trust Fund for De-mining and Mine Victims Assistance.

Finally, my delegation would like to draw your attention to our de-mining activities in line with the efforts to achieve lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula.

In April 2018, the leaders of the two Koreas met at the Panmunjom and agreed to transform the Korean Demilitarized Zone into a “peace zone” under the *“Panmunjom Declaration for Peace, Prosperity, and Unification of the Korean Peninsula.”*

Afterward, the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea removed landmines in the Joint Security Area. Also, as part of the *“Agreement on the Implementation of the Historic Panmunjom Declaration in the Military Domain”* annexed to the *“Pyongyang Joint Declaration,”* of September 2018, the two Koreas removed landmines in certain areas of the Korean Demilitarized Zone. Those areas were selected as the site to conduct a joint pilot search for remains of the Korean War.

Moreover, at the 74th United Nations General Assembly in 2019, President Moon set out his vision to transform the Korean Demilitarized Zone into an “international peace zone”, including clearing landmines in the area with the support of the international community.

The Republic of Korea will continue the dialogue and explore further opportunities for cooperation. We would like to ask for the continued support from the international community to bring lasting peace to the Korean Peninsula. Thank you. /End/.