



Kingdom of the Netherlands

Statement of the Netherlands

delivered by

**H.E. Robbert Gabriëlse, Permanent Representative to the
Conference on Disarmament**

at the

Fifth Annual Pledging Conference

of the

Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

Geneva, 25 February 2020

Mr President,

Thank you. As I am taking the floor for the first time in a formal meeting of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, I would like to congratulate you for assuming the role of president of this Convention. Let me assure you that my delegation will fully support you during your tenure as president leading up to the 18th Meeting of States Parties.

In addition to the statement delivered by the EU, the Netherlands would like to make the following remarks in its national capacity.

I will focus my intervention on the financial contributions the Netherlands is making towards the success of the APMBC and conclude with a few remarks on the importance of sustainable financing of the Convention.

Firstly, the Netherlands currently runs a **multi-annual humanitarian Mine Action and Cluster Munitions support programme worth 45 million euros**, spanning the period 2016-2020. We support activities of three mine action operators, namely the Mines Advisory Group, the HALO Trust and Danish Church Aid, in 14 countries and territories, namely Afghanistan, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Kosovo, Lebanon, Libya, Mali, Palestinian Territories, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, and Yemen. The programme focuses on gender as well as innovation and includes funds up to **10 million euros for emergency response**. In this context, we are making resources available for contamination caused by Da'esh in Iraq, Syria and Libya. As conflicts are taking place more and more in urban areas, causing civilian casualties, the Ottawa community needs to adapt its approach to Mine Action. The Netherlands is ready to contribute its part by actively addressing these issues.

The current programme was evaluated in 2019. The evaluation is publicly available on the Netherlands' government website and we encourage any interested party to read the evaluation. Some key recommendations from the evaluation was to have more focus on capacity building and a better nexus between mine action and development activities. The evaluation was used as the basis for setting up our **new multi-annual humanitarian Mine Action and Cluster Munitions support programme worth 51 million euros** that will run from 2020 until 2024. The tender for this new programme will open in a couple of weeks. It will focus on operational mine action, but also on capacity building, innovation, and policy influencing.

Secondly, the Netherlands supports the **UNMAS Voluntary Trust Fund with an annual unearmarked contribution of 3 million euros**. On top of that, in 2019, we provided a one-kind contribution of 3 million euros to UNMAS's activities in Iraq.

Thirdly, we support the **Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining** for Mine Action research, so the sector continues to be abreast of the latest developments. We support Mine Action done in an effective, efficient and safe way.

Fourthly, and most importantly in the context of today's pledging conference, the Netherlands will continue to **support the ISU with a multi-annual contribution of 40.000 euros**, at least until 2021. We will continue to support the APMBC **Sponsorship Programme with a multi-annual contribution of 10.000 euros**, at least until 2021.

To conclude, with regard to the importance of **sustainable financing** of the meetings of the Convention, we are concerned with the systemic late and non-payments that are plaguing this Convention as well. As a result, for the last three years, we had to cut one of the formal meeting days of the Meetings of States Parties and the Fourth Review Conference. The last-minute savings, we were forced to make, are eventually detrimental to the functioning of this Convention.

We strongly urge States to pay their contributions in full and on time. We would like to remind all States Parties of **action #10 of the Oslo Action plan** that calls upon States Parties to pay their assessed contributions in line with Article 14 of the Convention. The financial situation of the convention will continue to deteriorate if States do not fulfill their financial obligations. This situation needs to be addressed, including by implementing the actions taken at the last Review Conference and through increasing transparency, so we can continue to do our work as envisaged with a view to reaching a mine free world by 2025.

Thank you Mr President.