

Nineteenth Meeting of the State Parties

Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines  
and Their Destruction

Cooperation and assistance

**Statement by Finland**

The Hague, 17 November 2021

Mr. President,

I would like to begin by expressing our appreciation to the honourable chair and his team for the impeccable work during the Presidency despite of the challenges caused by the sudden change to a virtual format. You have our full support. In addition to the statement made by the European Union, I would like to deliver some remarks in our national capacity.

Mr. President,

Finland has been an ardent supporter of humanitarian mine action for over three decades. Key components of our comprehensive humanitarian mine approach, updated in 2020, are clearance, risk education, victim assistance, stockpile destruction, and advocacy. Furthermore, building local capacity is emphasised, with an objective of assisting host countries to develop an ability to tackle remaining contamination in the long term.

We see humanitarian mine action not only as an important form of humanitarian assistance but also as part of a wider effort to promote long-term security, stability and development. In fact, mine action is a perfect example of the nexus between security, development and rights – in this case, the most important right of all: the right to life. It is a crucial factor in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in meeting the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The promotion and protection of full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons, including persons with disabilities is one of our main priorities and a strong focus area in humanitarian work. We cooperate actively with UN organizations, UN member states and institutions and civil society to ensure that disability inclusion incorporates on the agenda of all relevant actors, both at strategic level and in the implementation of humanitarian assistance from the onset of emergencies. About 15 % of the world's population live with disabilities. We highlight the importance of humanitarian demining work to prevent casualties affecting civilians, especially women, children and other persons in vulnerable situations. Our aim is to combat multiple and intersecting discrimination and promote equality for all.

Gender perspective - through all stages of mine action activities - is at the core of our humanitarian mine action concept. Promoting gender equality and human rights, strengthening the influence and participation of women and girls as well as advancing non-discrimination are of great importance to us. Gender equality can be facilitated, among other things, by providing women equal access to employment opportunities in humanitarian mine action operations.

For the period of 2021-2025, we are allocating 15 million euros for humanitarian mine action projects. This marks an increase of 3 million euro in comparison to the previous five-year period. We concentrate on fragile states and environments where mines pose a major problem and which need urgent support to tackle it. Recipients of our assistance are Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Somalia, and Ukraine. Review of the preceding five-year programme confirmed that our support to these countries is both efficient and relevant. In assessing the results of humanitarian mine action, we see that emphasis should be placed on long-term effects. Therefore, in addition to annual reports, which enable monitoring of individual projects and their outputs, the effects of mine action should be assessed 10-20 years after inception of activities.

It is of utmost importance that States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention continue to keep up their engagement with the Convention's obligations, and those in position to do so continue to provide the humanitarian demining community with the resources and tools they need in these exceptional circumstances.

Mr President,

I would like to conclude by viewing with appreciation the extraordinary courage and dedication of the humanitarian demining community as well as flexibility and adaptability they have demonstrated during these challenging times.

Thank you, Mr President.