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Video-message to the Nineteenth Meeting of the States Parties
to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

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Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a distinct pleasure to convey my warm greetings to the Nineteenth Meeting of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

I would like to commend Ambassador Robbert Jan Gabriëlse of the Netherlands for leading the work of the Convention throughout this challenging year.

I also welcome the focus of the presidency on the priority themes of capacity building, innovation and inclusivity.

Today, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention is recognized as a major humanitarian achievement. Twenty-five years ago, a unique partnership of States, international organizations, civil society, and landmine survivors linked disarmament, international humanitarian, and international human rights laws with efforts to reduce human suffering by eliminating a particularly horrendous weapon. The result was remarkable – a comprehensive humanitarian disarmament treaty banning the use, development,

production, and trade of mines; setting clear timebound mine clearance and stockpile destruction obligations; addressing the plight of mine victims and promoting mine risk education for affected communities and vulnerable groups; encouraging effective assistance and cooperation; and establishing a robust and adaptable multilateral policy and mechanism for the implementation of the Convention's goals.

While the Convention's achievements are commendable, we must not lose sight of the reality that anti-personnel mines continue to kill and maim in numbers, vulnerable civilians in particular. To highlight some salient points:

- Alleged use of antipersonnel landmines is still taking place in different parts of the world;
- For the sixth consecutive year, in 2020 the number of casualties remained significant - 7,073, of which 80 percent were civilians;
- Some 60 States and areas, including 33 States Parties, are still contaminated by antipersonnel mines. The COVID-19 pandemic has added additional challenges to the demining operations in several countries;
- With its 164 States parties, the Convention is still not universal, and about one dozen of the States not yet party are reportedly still producing or using antipersonnel landmines.

The United Nations strongly deplores the use of such weapons by any actor. I take this opportunity to call upon you to renew your efforts to fulfil the enhanced responsibility you have undertaken by acceding to the Convention.

I regret that two State parties have missed the respective stock destruction deadlines and are in violation of article 4 of the Convention. I urge those two States to complete their mine destruction obligations as soon as possible.

All affected States should also intensify their efforts to clear all mine-contaminated areas within the Convention's deadlines. I am particularly concerned that one State party is now in violation of its article 5 obligations.

I also urge you all to continue to promote and strengthen multilateralism in working together to address the needs of the survivors, and for the total eradication of the threat posed by anti-personnel mines.

A few years ago, you proclaimed your determination to meet the Convention's key goals by 2025 – in four short years. The Nineteenth Meeting of the States Parties will be another opportunity to assess the implementation of the Oslo Action Plan in achieving this aspirational goal.

The United Nations stands ready to support you in this noble pursuit.

I wish you all success in your endeavours.