



Statement of the Netherlands

delivered by

**H.E. Robbert Jan Gabriëlse, Permanent Representative of the the
Netherlands to the Conference on Disarmament, Disarmament
Ambassador-at-large**

at

**18th Meeting of States Parties of
the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention**

on

**Priorities of the Netherlands' Presidency of the
19th Meeting of States Parties**

Thank you Mr President.

It is an honour and privilege to address the States Parties of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the larger mine action community today as Sudan's successful presidency comes to a close and the Netherlands' will be handed over the torch. I would like to commend the Sudanese presidency, in particular you – Mr President – ambassador Mohammed, the Coordination Committee members, the ISU and the UN Secretariat for the excellent work they conducted this year, despite the difficult Covid-19 circumstances. A solid baseline has been set to start the implementation of the Oslo Action Plan.

This week's conference has shown again the importance of mine action in every aspect, be it mine clearance, mine risk education and reduction programmes, and victim assistance. We are pleased to celebrate Chile being mine free after tremendous efforts and political determination. The United Kingdom also destroyed its last mine recently and has now declared its territory free of mines. These are successes we need to build on as we try to get as many countries across this line by 2025.

In her video message, the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of the Netherlands, Sigrid Kaag, outlined our priority themes that will run as a common thread through our presidency. Namely, capacity building, innovation and inclusivity.

Allow me to flesh out what that means in practice.

[Capacity building]

Firstly, capacity building is crucial for mine action to be sustainable. This means that national authorities are equipped to take ownership of their national mine action programmes in order to safeguard their people from the threat of mines and to assist mine survivors. In the field of mine clearance, this means for example, that we must ensure that International Mine Action Standards are implemented by

adopting national mine action standards and ensuring that they are up to date. On mine risk reduction and education, we must ensure that the actions we agreed on in the Oslo Action Plan can be implemented adequately at the national level, by local governments. On victim assistance, it means that there is sufficient national capacity to deal with the specific needs of mine survivors. But also, in order for the implementation of this Convention to be monitored and to increase transparency, national capacity to submit high quality Article 7 transparency reports needs to be built. Lastly, in the field of international cooperation and assistance, apart from focusing on the individualised approach, where we highlight individual cases of mine affected countries and link them up to the donor community, we need to ensure that this is replicated and strengthened at the national level of these affected countries as well. Cooperation between national authorities, donors, mine action operators, UN and other organisations and other stakeholders needs to be strengthened at the national and local level.

[Innovation]

Secondly, innovation is a key pillar to the progress of the Netherlands. Apart from embracing innovation at home, we believe in the power of innovation abroad as well. This certainly applies to the mine action sector. For example, in mine risk reduction and education programmes, innovative ideas to provide these programmes in conflict situations should be further explored. Also new digital technologies can be used for mine risk education purposes, such as the use of social media and cooperation with social media companies. In the area of mine clearance, we advocate the development of new technologies to make mine clearance more effective, but also to improve land-releasing methodologies. On the retention of stockpiles for training purposes, we would like to encourage countries to use new technologies, such as 3D printing, to substitute live mines for so-called 'dummies'. This allows us to destroy all mines in a country. And lastly, on article 7 transparency reporting, we look forward to the launch of the online reporting tool during our presidency. This effort is being spearheaded by the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance.

[Inclusivity]

Lastly, our third priority theme is inclusivity. Mine action is only successful if done in an inclusive way. For victim assistance, this means that we do not only focus on physical assistance, by among others providing for prostheses, but we also ensure the psycho-social side of mine accidents are addressed by providing mental health and psycho-social support, for example through community projects. In the field of mine risk reduction and education programmes, we ensure that we include all relevant stakeholders and take gender issues into account, when devising the strategies that should in the end serve and protect all. Lastly, and most importantly, no one is left behind when working towards the achievement of our goal of a mine-free world. All States Parties should get a chance to achieve this and we can only do this together with a shared determination and political will.

These three themes will be our common thread as the Netherlands fulfils its mandate as the president of this important convention from tomorrow onwards. Apart from the many mine action priorities highlighted here, we will of course ensure that we will fulfil the mandate of the presidency with regard to the **universalisation** of this Convention and with regard to ensuring the Convention's **finances** are on a **sustainable footing**.

We look forward to working together very closely with the members of the Coordination Committee, the UN Secretariat and of course on a daily basis with the Implementation Support Unit under the diligent leadership of its Director, Juan Carlos Ruan. We also look forward to cooperating with the many non-governmental organisations, industry and international organisations as we move forward. Last and certainly not least, we look forward to joining hands with the Member States of this Convention and other interested states as we work on the implementation of the Oslo Action Plan.

As the Oslo Declaration of 2019 states, let's commit to strengthen our efforts in order to achieve our common goals of a mine-free world and the full and equal inclusion of survivors and victims.

Thank you very much.