

Opening remarks by Dr Barbara Haering,  
President of the Council of Foundation of the GICHD,  
20MSP APMBC, Geneva, 21 November 2022

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the time of its adoption, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention stood as the promise of a broad international community to end casualties and suffering caused by anti-personnel mines. And it reflected the unwavering commitment of the international community to support states on their way to a thriving and sustainable future without risks from explosive ordnance. Today, the Convention is still guiding us in our daily efforts towards a mine-free world. This is of particular importance as new challenges and persistent conflicts put pressure on the relevance of the norms against the use of anti-personnel landmines.

However, despite such challenges we are not going to diminish our commitments towards the full implementation of the Convention, nor relent our efforts regarding its universalisation. In doing so we can build on what has been achieved during the last 25 years. 31 States Parties have reached completion under Article 5, others are no longer far from achieving the Convention's time-bound obligations. It is our joint responsibility to keep attention high and assistance adequate, to provide States Parties with targeted, effective, and efficient support that will enable them to make this step as soon as possible. In addition, States Parties shall continue to monitor and adjust their progress through the solid framework provided by the Oslo Action Plan. The Oslo Action Plan offers a central, results-based guide to sustainable impact.

Today's conflicts are protracted. Moreover, they are increasingly fluid, blurring the distinction between conflict and post-conflict phases. Thus, demining as well as other humanitarian actions are confronted with complex and unstable operational environments. Where hostilities are ongoing, full-fledged mine action is not possible. However, humanitarian action can still be taken to mitigate harm to civilians. Two areas are particularly important in this respect. Firstly, collecting, managing, and sharing information on contaminated areas to guide emergency humanitarian demining and to prepare for future mine action programs. Secondly, risk education protecting civilians from explosive ordnance threats, especially where large population movements increase their vulnerability to explosive threats.

The GICHD will continue to work with partners, starting with national authorities, to establish key ingredients needed to address risks posed by explosive ordnance in a safe, inclusive, effective, and efficient way. The Centre will do so by providing four mutually reinforcing lines of service:

- Generating knowledge regarding professional and inclusive mine action
- Disseminating knowledge and supporting national strategies and capacity building
- Supporting the codification of knowledge to support our joint commitments
- Fostering partnerships, dialogue, and cooperation

The GICHD will promote solutions that are innovative, tailored, inclusive, and sustainable. In addition, building on the Centre's experience in reframing mine action as an enabler for broader agendas, we will focus on promoting and operationalising linkages of mine action with peace. To this end, we will draw on our regional co-operation programmes.

To conclude, I would like to thank the Colombian Presidency and the ISU for their tremendous work leading our community through to the Twentieth Meeting of the States Parties. And I would like to congratulate us all on the Twenty-fifth anniversary of the Convention, expressing a hope that this will mark a new phase for its implementation, with an intensified progress and renewed action towards achieving a mine-free world.

I wish us all a successful and fruitful twentieth Meeting of the States Parties.

Thank you.