

**Video message by High Representative Nakamitsu to the Twentieth Meeting
of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention**

Geneva, 21 November 2022

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to convey my greetings to the 164 States parties and all the participants in the 20th Meeting of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

I would like to commend Colombia and Ambassador Ayala for guiding the work of the Convention throughout 2022.

I am particularly pleased to address this forum, as this year we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the adoption and opening for signature of this remarkable treaty.

The process that led to the adoption of the Convention 25 years ago had a far-reaching impact on the overall approach to the multilateral negotiations in disarmament and arms control. Operating, as it did, outside the constraints of the traditional fora, the process was more inclusive, open not only to the States representatives, but also to International Committee of the Red Cross, civil society and, in particular, to the landmine victims and survivors. The traditional balance between military utility and humanitarian impact was “adjusted” by placing the

human being in the centre of the negotiations. Humanitarian Disarmament - as we call it today - was born.

This Convention, its negotiation and implementation, have demonstrated the value of effective collaboration between different stakeholders: the partnership of likeminded States, international and non-governmental organizations, academia, victims and survivors – all united around a humanitarian imperative. Indeed, this has been recognized as the cornerstone of this instrument. In the current complex international security surrounding, the international community is in an urgent need of such a progressive and innovative approach – one which can rely on broad public support, the knowledge of academia, and the dynamism and expertise of civil society and its ability to multiply the effect of State action. One which, above all, prioritizes human-centered security.

The Convention, its negotiation, and implementation have also proved the value of the cooperative humanitarian action. The implementation process established by the States parties of the Convention has shown itself to be both pragmatic and adaptive to the changing circumstances. And it is based on cooperation instead of competition and confrontation. As a result, its importance is clear and those affected by landmines, with the active involvement and dedication of the entire mine action community, have achieved tangible results. In particular:

- Over 55 million stockpiled antipersonnel mines have been destroyed by the 164 States parties to the Convention, the majority of which have met their article 5 obligations.

- Vast contaminated areas have been cleared of anti-personnel mines and explosive remnants of war, thus facilitating post-conflict recovery, sustainable development, and the rebuilding of livelihoods.
- Worldwide production and transfer of anti-personnel landmines has been almost halted with only a dozen of States still reported to produce these unacceptable weapons that kill and maim indiscriminately.
- Suffering has been reduced and the healthcare, rehabilitation, and reintegration needs of victims and survivors have been addressed more efficiently, in particular through the adoption of victim assistance or relevant disability plans.
- Mine risk education has been provided to populations affected by antipersonnel mine contamination thus contributing to casualty reduction.

I commend you for these achievements and for having set such an exceptionally high standard for treaty compliance and implementation.

I commend you as well for your determination to address the challenges, keep the momentum, implement the Oslo Action Plan, and achieve a Mine Free World.

That said, we still have some ways to go. After the unprecedented implementation challenges over the last 2 years due to the numerous COVID-related restrictions, the Convention's fundamental commitment to comprehensively prohibiting and getting rid of these weapons remains under pressure:

- Over 30 States parties still have mine-contaminated areas to clear, and millions stockpiled mines still await destruction by two States parties.
- Use of anti-personnel mines has exacerbated the heavy toll being brought by armed conflicts upon the civilian population and has led to further increase in the number of mine victims.
- The efficacy of the Convention's implementation process is also challenged by the continuing failure by a number of States to meet their financial obligations, thus undermining the financial sustainability of the process.

Addressing these challenges will require renewed effort, resource mobilization, and sustained commitment.

Allow me to reiterate once again that anti-personnel landmines are relics of the past. The use of anti-personnel mines is unacceptable and violates key principles of international humanitarian law.

There is no alternative to the humanitarian imperative of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the ultimate success of the Convention and its humanitarian goals rests with you and your determination and energy to free the world of this scourge. The United Nations remains committed to supporting you in this endeavor.

I take this opportunity to also call upon all States that have not yet done so to consider acceding to the Convention at the earliest possible convenience.

I wish you success in your Meeting, and I thank you very much for your attention.