

Twenty-First Meeting of the State Parties

Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of
Anti-Personnel Mines and Their Destruction, Geneva, November 2023

International Cooperation and Assistance

Statement by Finland, delivered by Minister-Counsellor Antti Vaaras

Mr President,

It is a pleasure to speak on behalf of Finland today. I would like to begin by thanking you and your team for your hard work in preparation for this meeting, and during your Presidency. You have Finland's full support. I wish to align myself with the statement(s) of the European Union and add some remarks in my national capacity.

Finland's commitment to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention is unwavering. It remains one of the cornerstones of conventional arms control. Its relevance is further highlighted in the current difficult international situation. It is clearer than ever that we, the States Parties, must uphold our joint commitments and strive to comply with the Convention's obligations in full. We are deeply concerned about, and condemn, the continued use of anti-personnel mines anywhere, anytime, and by any actor and in this context we condemn Russia's illegal and unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine.

Mr President,

Humanitarian mine action is not only a valuable form of humanitarian assistance but also a part of a wider effort to promote international security, stability and development. It plays an important role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is essential that we continue to provide the humanitarian demining community the resources and tools that they need to continue their vital work.

Finland has been a steadfast supporter of humanitarian mine action for three decades. Key components of our comprehensive approach include clearance, risk education, victim assistance, stockpile destruction, and advocacy. We emphasize building local, long-term capacity to assist host countries to develop their abilities to tackle mine contamination.

Our support to humanitarian mine action projects totals approximately 15 million Euros in the period from 2021 to 2025. It is focused on fragile environments where mines and explosives pose significant obstacles to peace and security, and thus, to development. Our current focus countries are Ukraine, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Somalia.

In our humanitarian work, we emphasize the promotion and protection of full human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as non-discrimination, of all persons, including persons with disabilities. Furthermore, we underline the importance of including a meaningful gender perspective, through all stages of mine action activities. We seek to continue strengthening gender equality and the influence and participation of women and girls through practical means, by highlighting, among other things, equal access for women to employment opportunities in humanitarian mine action operations.

Mr President,

I would like to conclude by commending the humanitarian demining community for the dedication and flexibility that they have demonstrated when operating in the current extremely challenging circumstances. I would also like to thank the staff of the Implementation Support Unit for their excellent work. We continue our support to the ISU, through a voluntary financial contribution of 10 000 Euros this year. We encourage other States Parties to also continue their support, to ensure ISU's sustained operations.

In conclusion, let me express our full support to all efforts aiming at the strengthening of the implementation of the Convention.

I thank you, Mr President.