

*Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It is a special honor for me to address you at this 21th Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention on behalf of ITF Enhancing Human Security.

ITF greatly appreciates the tremendous humanitarian work and efforts of everyone involved in Mine Action. Year 2023 has been especially trying for countries and communities living in mine affected countries. It has also illustrated the everyday struggles of mine victims – limited access to appropriate basic life commodities such food, water, shelter and healthcare, restricted mobility, psychological distress, and economic hardship to name just a few.

Unfortunately, due to continuous active conflict in Ukraine, recent destabilization of South Caucasus and recurrence of heavy hostilities in Izrael, Gaza and the West Bank, with possible regional spillover effect, mines and explosive remnants of war will continue to pose a serious and ongoing threat to the civilian population. Due to the nature of the work, the tremendous loss of civilian life and the scale of the problem, ITF strongly believes that efficient and effective mine action work can only be accomplished in peaceful and stable environment, with adequate funding and strong international and local partnerships.

We should continue to work tirelessly at providing humanitarian aid. Mine clearance, victims' assistance, risk education, and advocacy are all envoys in the mission of achieving a mine free world. ITF would like to reinstate the importance of victim's assistance, especially mental health and psychosocial support, and urge the donor community to increase their contribution in the field.

Regarding this, ITF would like to commend the organizers for the success of the recent Third Global Conference on the Assistance to Victims of Anti-Personnel Mines, held in October this year in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, and the opportunity ITF was given to take an active part in the panel on Cooperation and Assistance. The results of this conference will greatly help the preparations for the upcoming Review conference.

ITF is immensely grateful to all of its donors and partners, who make our work possible. They have worked with us throughout this year with patience and understanding, and a common wish for a better future and a mine free world. With strong partnership and shared goals, we are confident that our vision can be achieved.

Thank you.