

Eight Pledging Conference for the Implementation of the Anti-Personal Mine Ban Convention

Intervention by Ukraine

24 March 2023

**Mr. President,
Distinguished Delegates**

At the outset, let me congratulate you on assuming the Presidency of the 21st meeting of the state parties of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and wish you and your team every success in your endeavors. Please be assured of our delegation's full, close and constructive cooperation.

Ukraine aligns itself with the Statement of the EU and I would like to add several comments in our national capacity.

The Delegation of Ukraine appreciates your efforts, the efforts of the Implementation Support Unit and its Director, Australia as Coordinator of the Convention's Sponsorship Programme and the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance to support interested affected states to engage in an individualized approach and welcomes the eighth Pledging Conference for the effective implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention as it provides among others an opportunity to enhance cooperation and assistance for mine action.

Nowadays Ukraine is one of the most mine-affected countries in the world.

Due to the use by the Russian Federation of all types of weapons, including those prohibited by this Convention on the territory of Ukraine, about 30% of Ukraine's territory is contaminated with mines and explosive ordnance.

The ongoing Russian aggression, active hostilities, irregularity, non-selectivity and massive use of anti-personal mines by the armed forces of the Russian Federation do not allow to accurately evaluate the scale of mine contamination, precisely identify all mined areas and its impact on the population in the hostilities areas.

The war against Ukraine is regrettably resulting in the contamination of the new territories by explosive ordnance. 160,000 km² of Ukrainian territory on land and 14,000 km² of water areas on which hostilities were conducted and now continue to conduct are subject to preliminary survey.

Ukraine also regrets, that all its efforts to complete the destruction of placed anti-personnel mines in accordance with the Article 5 of the Convention together with the international partners and to continue activities on the destruction of all stockpiled anti-personnel mines under Article 4, are undermined by the country which even is not a State Party to the Convention.

Despite of all these challenges Ukraine continues taking the necessary measures for humanitarian demining to ensure the safety of civilians and to create conditions for sustainable development in the affected regions. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, since the beginning of the Russian aggression, the State Emergency Service of Ukraine, together with the National Police, has removed about 500,000 shells and explosives devices.

Ukraine is making every effort to clear the territory from the explosive objects and mines, where possible, together with the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), all relevant UN and other agencies and international organizations, as well as with the great support provided by the United States of America, Canada, the United Kingdom, Japan and the EU for the mine action projects.

Moreover, a month ago Government of Ukraine decided to establish a state institution, the Ukrainian Center for Humanitarian Demining, which will serve as a secretariat and think tank in order to collect and summarize information on demining needs from the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the State Emergency Service of Ukraine, regional military administrations, partner countries and international organizations. On 14 February an Interagency Working Group on Humanitarian Demining was established in Ukraine.

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Humanitarian demining is the first stage in the restoration of the de-occupied territories, which makes it possible to start rebuilding housing and critical infrastructure. The need for demining is growing as Ukrainian territories are liberated. On 20 March, an Action Plan for demining agricultural land for the sowing campaign has been approved. According to the State Emergency Service of Ukraine, 10 regions of Ukraine are in the greatest need of demining today. This is an immense amount of tasks. This requires international assistance, including expert technological and financial support.

In this regard Ukraine calls for further consolidation of the international efforts to strengthen mine action, to better assist Ukraine in overcoming the lasting consequence as well as to intensify pressure on russia to stop immediately its ongoing unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine and any indiscriminate use of explosive devices in violation of international law.

In conclusion, let me once again reiterate, Ukraine remains committed to the Mine Ban Convention and believes that implementing the Ottawa Convention is fundamental for peace, stabilization and economic recovery. It is our responsibility to preserve, strengthen and ensure its universalization.

I thank you.