



Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

Fifth Review Conference

Siem Reap, 25-29 November 2024

EU Statement on Universalisation

Mr. President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The candidate countries North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania¹, Ukraine and Republic of Moldova as well as the EFTA country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union (EU) would like to assure you, Mr. Thuch, of our full support. We would like to thank Cambodia for its hospitality and commend you Mr. President, your team and the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) for the effective and transparent preparatory process carried out in the run-up to this Review Conference. The EU appreciates Cambodia's universalisation efforts and all outreach activities carried out by the President.

As a strong supporter of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the universal ban on anti-personnel mines, the EU is determined to continue to promote the universalisation of the Convention and support States Parties in their full and effective implementation. United in support of the Convention, the EU and its 27 Member States welcome the priority given by the Presidency to universalisation.

The Convention is a success story of effective multilateralism. A key disarmament instrument, the Convention combines a strong global norm against the use of anti-personnel mines with a comprehensive response to end the suffering and casualties caused by these weapons. Since

¹ North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

the signing of the Convention over two decades ago, over 55 million mines held in stockpiles have been destroyed and production and transfers have become almost non-existent.

However, the Convention's objectives have not been achieved in full and significant challenges remain. Across five continents, anti-personnel mine contamination continues to cause harm, instil fear, deny access, impede socio-economic development and stop refugees and internally displaced people from returning home. Anti-personnel mines and explosive remnants of war place a high and unacceptable burden on individuals, families, communities, regions and States.

In light of these significant challenges, the EU is determined to promote the Convention's universalisation. The EU is the world's second-largest donor in mine action. In this framework, it allocated 2.6 million EUR to the ISU to promote the Convention among non-States Parties in the period 2021-2025, and will continue to do so. We fully stand behind Actions 11 and 12 of the Oslo Action Plan, which require States to "use all available avenues to promote ratification of and access to the Convention by States not party including by encouraging their participation in the work of the Convention". Moreover, the EU has carried out workshops at national, sub-regional and regional levels with relevant ministries or institutions of States not yet parties to the Convention.

Mr. President,

The EU and its Member States regret the lack of progress in the universalisation of the Convention since 2017, with 33 States remaining outside. On this matter, the EU has conducted demarches calling on countries across Asia and the Pacific to accede to the Convention, and, as an interim step, before accession, pronounce a self-declared policy of non-use in order to accelerate progress towards achieving a world free of anti-personnel mines. In this regard, we welcome the announcement made today by Tonga to pursue efforts to accede to the Convention.

We hope that the Fifth Review Conference of the Convention serves as a vital platform for an open and constructive dialogue to evaluate progress, reaffirm commitments, and further advance both the universalisation and strengthened implementation of the Convention. We look forward to adopting the Siem Reap Action Plan addressing all aspects of the implementation of the Convention, including universalisation efforts, such as through high-level engagement

and cooperation and assistance at the global, regional, and sub-regional levels to promote ratification of/accession to the Convention.

The EU is committed to actively contributing to the success of the Review Conference. We will support all efforts promoting universalisation, including those led by the Presidency, the ISU, and the Convention's Special Envoys, His Royal Highness Prince Mired Raad Al-Hussein of Jordan, and Her Royal Highness Princess Astrid of Belgium. To this end, we will support incentives, such as funding, to encourage universalisation. We will continue sponsoring relevant delegates from target States to participate in Convention meetings to enable States Parties to engage with them effectively and ensure that Convention's meetings remain on the target States' radar and something they can participate in.

The EU invites other States Parties to join its outreach efforts, emphasise the advantages of joining the Convention, and explore all available avenues to promote accession and universal observance of its norms and objectives. The EU will continue its financial support to the Convention's universalisation through dedicated fund and projects under a new Council Decision.

I thank you, Mr. President.