



**KEY NOTE ADDRESS
DELIVERED BY
THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA,
HIS EXCELLENCY ALHAJI DR. MAHAMUDU BAWUMIA
AT THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON ADDRESSING THE
HUMANITARIAN IMPACT OF IMPROVISED ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES
13TH TO 15TH FEBRUARY, 2024
MOVENPIC AMBASSADOR HOTEL, ACCRA**

His Excellency, Dr. LY Thuch, President of the Fifth Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, First Vice President of the Cambodia Mine Action Authority and Senior Minister attached to the Prime Minister of Cambodia,

His Excellency Ambassador Orchid Ramiandrasoa Razaaly, the EU Ambassador-Head of Delegation,

Hon. Shirley Ayorkor Botchway, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration,

Hon. Ambrose Dery, Minister for the Interior, MP for Nandom Constituency,

Hon. Albert Kan-Dapaah, Minister for National Security,

Hon. Dominic Nitiwul, Minister for Defence, MP for Bimbila Constituency,

Rev. Prof. Frimpong-Manso (rtd) Board Chairman, National Commission on Small Arms & Light Weapons,

Mr. Samuel Williams Yeboah, Executive Secretary, National Commission on Small Arms & Light Weapons,

Mr. Carlos Juan Ruan, the Director, Anti –Personnel Mine Ban Convention Implementations Support Unit,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my distinct honour and privilege to welcome you all on behalf of His Excellency the President of the Republic of Ghana to the Regional Conference on Addressing the Humanitarian Impact of Improvised Anti-Personnel Mines, convened in the vibrant city of Accra, Ghana. As we gather here today, representing various nations, organizations, and stakeholders, we unite under a common goal: to confront and mitigate the devastating humanitarian consequences caused by improvised anti-personnel mines.

This conference serves as a vital platform for dialogue, collaboration, and action. We come together with a shared commitment to safeguarding human lives, protecting communities, and advancing peace and stability in our regions. It is imperative that we confront the menace of improvised anti-personnel mines with unwavering determination and collective effort.

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction also known as the Mine Ban Treaty seeks an end to the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines through the pursuit of four core aims: Ensuring universal adherence, clearing mined areas, destroying stockpiled mines, and assisting the victims. To achieve these aims: National Legislation, Cooperation and Assistance, Transparency and Exchange of Information, Facilitating Compliance, and Implementation Support are essential. It is encouraging to note, that the convention has 164 State Parties including Ghana, which is a good indication of a successful implementation of the Convention though the numbers could be far more.

According to Minesweepers, it is currently estimated that there are about 110 million landmines scattered across the globe. While the individual cost of mines ranges from \$3 to \$30, the expense of their removal varies significantly, ranging from \$300 to \$1000 per mine. Considering these figures, the total expenditure for clearing all existing mines is projected to range from a substantial \$50 billion to \$100 billion. However, the Landmine Monitor (2022) report indicates that States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty have destroyed more than 55 million stockpiled antipersonnel mines. This underscores the significant

financial commitment made by both States and international organizations worldwide towards the effective implementation of the Convention.

The Landmine Monitor reported that in 2022, at least 4,710 individuals were killed or injured by landmines or Explosive Remnants of War (ERWs) in 49 states. Among them, 1,661 lost their lives, 3,015 sustained injuries, while the status of 34 remains unknown. Civilian casualties constituted 85% of the total, with nearly half of the civilian victims being children (49%), amounting to a total of 1,071.

As of October 2023, it was also reported by the Land Mine Monitor that approximately 60 countries and other areas worldwide were grappling with the detrimental presence of anti-personnel landmines contaminating their territories. Among these, at least 24 States Parties are either believed or confirmed to be afflicted with improvised mine contamination. These states include some African states such as Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Nigeria, and Togo. The presence of improvised mines exacerbates the already grave humanitarian and security challenges faced by these nations, necessitating urgent and concerted efforts towards effective mine clearance and risk mitigation strategies.

The use of improvised anti-personnel mines poses a grave threat to civilians, particularly in conflict-affected regions. These insidious weapons indiscriminately maim and kill innocent men, women, and children, inflicting lasting physical and psychological harm. They disrupt livelihoods, impede socio-economic development, and hinder efforts to achieve sustainable peace and security.

Ghana recognizes the urgent need for concerted action to address the humanitarian impact of improvised anti-personnel mines. We remain steadfast in our commitment to promoting a world free from the scourge of landmines and explosive remnants of war. Even though Ghana is not a mine affected state, Ghana is finalizing its National Control List and the National Arms Commission Bill to include issues of Anti-Personnel Mines and ERW.

We are of the conviction that through robust national policies, legislation, and operational frameworks, we can mitigate the risks posed by these lethal devices and support affected communities in their recovery and rehabilitation.

As we convene over the next three days, I urge all participants to engage in constructive dialogue, share best practices, and explore innovative solutions to the challenges at hand. Let us harness the collective expertise, experience resources, and determination represented at this conference to strengthen mine action efforts, enhance victim assistance programs, and promote sustainable development in affected regions.

Furthermore, let us reaffirm our commitment to upholding international humanitarian law, including the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction (Ottawa Treaty). Compliance with these legal instruments is essential to preventing further human suffering and fostering a safer, more secure world for all. I therefore urge all States that are not Parties to the Convention to strive towards the ratification of the Convention.

In closing, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the European Union, who are the sponsors of this Conference, the Anti-Personnel Mine Convention Implementation Support Unit (ISU) and National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons, who are the organizers, for their dedication and tireless efforts in convening this Conference. May our deliberations be fruitful, our actions impactful, and our resolve unwavering as we work together to address the humanitarian impact of improvised anti-personnel mines in order to build a future of peace, prosperity and dignity for all.

Your Excellences, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, with these remarks, I hereby declare the Conference duly opened.

Thank you.