

## ISU intervention

- A few words on behalf of the Secretariat of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention – the ISU. At the outset, we would like to thank Ghana and their National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons for hosting this important conference. We also thank the European Union for its support without which this conference could not have taken place.
- 25 years of Convention implementation has seen real progress to end the suffering caused by anti-personnel mines around the world.
- In Africa, where the Convention boasts 53 States parties, efforts to address the disastrous humanitarian impact of these weapons have clearly been visible. Of the 26 African states parties which declared being affected by anti-personnel mines, 12 have so far completed their work, releasing vast areas of land for productive use and allowing their populations to move freely and without fear. A number of these States are in West Africa and the Sahel region.
- New challenges have now emerged caused by increased use of anti-personnel mines in recent conflicts. We are also witnessing new use of anti-personnel mines in States that were not previously affected by mines, and this includes the use of improvised anti-personnel mines by non-state actors. The annual casualty rates which had been decreasing since the entry into force of the Convention are now on the rise again.
- These challenges are affecting implementation and us getting to completion.
- The Convention is not new to challenges, it's had many over the course of its history and has had to adapt and find innovative approaches to implementation. It has always done so in a cooperative manner and it will no doubt do the same with the increasing challenges faced by some States Parties in the region.
- For this reason, last year the Convention's German Presidency presented a paper on anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature, recording some of the challenges faced by the affected States Parties and making recommendations in this regard.

- In particular, the German presidency highlighted the need to continue raising awareness amongst States Parties of their obligations to address the humanitarian impact of anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature within the framework of the Anti-Personnel Mine Convention and the importance of adhering to all the relevant decisions in this regard.
- It has been noted that many States Parties affected by anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature face challenges in accessing mine affected communities due to the presence of armed non-state actors.
- We need to move forward by sharing expertise, lessons learnt and best practices employed by those in similar circumstances.
- In this regard, the conference this week is very timely. It will give an opportunity to the region to discuss the impact of improvised anti-personnel mines and how this issue can be addressed within the framework of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. States Parties from West Africa and the Sahel region, we need to hear from you, your successes and your difficulties in implementing the Convention as well as your requirements for assistance.
- As you have heard, at the end of the year, we will be convening in Cambodia to hold our Fifth Review Conference. At the Fifth Review conference, we will be taking stock of progress achieved over the last five years and we will record the challenges, both those remaining, and those that have emerged and that are still to be overcome. States Parties will be adopting a new road map for the next five years based on the conclusions they draw on the status of implementation. It is important we hear the voices from your region in this regard.
- The conference this week should serve as an opportunity to share information during the various thematic sessions, express the challenges you face in relation to anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature as well as any other difficulties you may have in the implementation of the Convention.
- The programme this week has been built around a number of key topics related to improvised anti-personnel mines and to give ample time for discussion, presentation of national contexts and sharing of lessons and best practices. We hope that the exchanges will be fruitful.
- With us this week we have the pleasure of counting on the participation of experts from organisations, each of whom is playing a key role in supporting

States in their implementation efforts. They all have experience in addressing the impact of improvised anti-personnel mines in countries affected by them. Their contributions will be valuable this week.

- Also here this week are representatives of the African Union and ECOWAS, we look forward to hearing from them on the support they can provide states in addressing the impact of improvised anti-personnel mines.
- Finally, as your Secretariat, we stand ready to support you in your efforts to fulfil the aims of the Convention.
- We look forward to hearing from you and we wish you a successful conference.
- Thank you very much.