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Opening Remarks

**Twenty-Second Meeting of States Parties to the
Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention**

Monday, 1 December 2025, 10:00 AM, Geneva, Palais des Nations

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honor to address the Twenty-Second Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

Allow me to begin by expressing my sincere appreciation to the President, Ambassador Ichikawa of Japan, for her leadership and dedication.

I also extend a warm welcome to all delegations, United Nations entities, international and regional organizations, and civil society partners. Your steadfast support for this Convention and its vital humanitarian mission is commendable.

Excellencies,

We meet today at a critical juncture - for this Convention, for humanitarian disarmament, and international law itself.

The international security landscape is undergoing rapid and profound transformation, marked by escalating hostilities, intensifying strategic rivalries and competition, unprecedented military expenditures, regional instability, and the erosion of long-standing

norms that underpinned stability for decades. Global military spending is surging across all regions, reaching a record 2.7 trillion dollars in 2024.

This reflects a systemic shift towards militarized responses to evolving threats, with profound potential implications for global peace, stability and sustainable development and for multilateralism writ large. It is a shift driven by fear, built on the idea that exceptional threats justify exceptional measures, and premised on the dangerous notion that military necessity can override humanitarian considerations.

This logic strikes at the heart of what this Convention stands for: limiting human suffering precisely in times of war, instability and insecurity. It disregards decades of humanitarian disarmament efforts that have saved lives, protected civilians, built trust and promoted stability. If left unchecked, the entire legal framework designed to protect civilians risks further erosion.

I am deeply concerned by decisions to withdraw from the Convention. Let me also be clear: the Convention does not allow for suspension.

Humanitarian norms must apply precisely at the hardest moments – when they are most needed.

I also strongly condemn the continued use, development, and stockpiling of anti-personnel landmines by States and non-State actors.

That these indiscriminate weapons are still being used is nothing short of a collective failure of humanity.

After years of vital progress and declining casualties, it is tragic and unacceptable that the number of landmine victims is once again on the rise.

Let us be unequivocal: anti-personnel landmines do not make anyone safer. They kill and maim indiscriminately, and they continue to do so decades after conflicts end.

Their military utility has always been limited. New technologies and modern warfare have rendered them even more obsolete.

Leaving the Convention does not strengthen national defence. It weakens the global commitment to protecting civilian lives and human dignity.

Even as we confront these headwinds, we must recognize the extraordinary achievements of this Convention:

- Over 55 million anti-personnel mines destroyed.
- Millions of square meters of land cleared of landmines and explosive remnants of war in over 60 affected countries and territories.
- Dozens of countries declared themselves mine-free.

Most importantly, this Convention has entrenched a powerful global norm that stigmatizes these indiscriminate weapons worldwide. It stands as one of the major humanitarian achievements of our time. We must defend this legacy and ensure that it continues to grow.

Upholding international humanitarian norms and principles are key to our collective resolve to countering the erosion of the international order. We must ensure these norms and principles remains a pillar of defense and security in the face of armed aggression in violation of the UN Charter.

Even in these difficult times, we have reasons to celebrate. I congratulate the Marshall Islands and Tonga on joining the Convention and applaud Oman for completing its Article 5 obligations. I further commend States Parties on the progress made in implementing the

Convention. The United Nations remains fully committed to supporting you in advancing these efforts.

Call for action

Excellencies,

This Meeting of States Parties is both an opportunity and a responsibility.

As the Secretary-General has stressed in his global campaign on humanitarian disarmament and mine action, the protection of innocent lives depends on our collective action and determination.

We need renewed commitments, strengthened partnerships, sustained financing, and political resolve to ensure that promises made under the Convention translate into real, tangible and people-centered progress on the ground.

We have laid the foundations at the Review Conference with the Siem Reap–Angkor Action Plan.

The Twenty-Second Meeting must uphold these commitments and those we vowed more than 25 years ago. It must safeguard the laws and norms we have built together. It must preserve the integrity of the Convention. And it must make it loud and clear that anti-personnel landmines are unacceptable.

I urge States to reverse any withdrawal and recommit to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

Let us choose humanity. Let us act together to reaffirm the primacy of human security and strengthen this vital Convention. The victims and survivors of these weapons, and the communities still living under their threat, deserve nothing less.

I thank you very much for your attention.