

## **22 MSP OTTAWA CONVENTION** **CANADA INTERVENTION**

Madame President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Esteemed Colleagues,

Thank you for giving me the floor. We gather here in Geneva at a moment when the principles that underpin our collective disarmament efforts face unprecedented strain. The landscape of global security is shifting in troubling ways. The resurgence of armed conflict in multiple regions, the erosion of long-standing international norms, and the undermining of multilateral institutions together present challenges that demand our urgent attention.

Canada is increasingly concerned by the growing challenges not only to the norms of the Ottawa Convention, but also to the broader disarmament architecture that has been built through decades of painstaking diplomacy, negotiation, and trust-building. The instruments that forged this architecture—the Ottawa Convention, the Convention on Cluster Munitions, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, to name just a few—were created because the international community recognized that the humanitarian, developmental, and security consequences of such weapons are unacceptable. These treaties represent some of our most important collective achievements.

Yet today, these collective achievements are being threatened, the principal cause of which is Russia's illegal and unjustifiable war on Ukraine and its dangerous and destabilizing actions against other states. This is the root of instability in the international security environment and is a core reason for the erosion of trust in the rules based international order.

Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine has led to a rise in the use of weapons that for years the international community has sought to eliminate, particularly anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions. Its large-scale use of anti-personnel landmines has resulted in many civilian casualties and contamination of vast areas of arable land, to the detriment of the world's food supply, and has created a legacy of unexploded ordnance that will take decades to clear.

And Ukraine is not the only state dealing with such a legacy. There are regions around the world that continue to experience the long-lasting human suffering and wide-spread consequences of using anti-personnel landmines. We must not forget that this is a global treaty, tackling what is unfortunately still a global problem.

Madame President,

The humanitarian imperative that drove the creation of the Ottawa Convention recognizes that anti-personnel mines inflict harm long after conflict has ended, often

against those least able to protect themselves—children walking to school, farmers tending their fields, and families returning home. Our shared commitment to ban these weapons is rooted in humanitarian necessity.

Canada emphasizes that the Convention's obligations remain binding at all times and under all circumstances. This principle is essential. International humanitarian law was designed to regulate the conduct of armed conflict. The related disarmament treaties apply not only during times of peace and stability, but precisely to guide behaviour during periods of instability and conflict, when the risks to civilians are highest.

Canada affirms that the Ottawa Convention does not envision the suspension of a State Party's obligations as a response to an armed conflict. Attempts to reinterpret, dilute, or selectively apply the Convention's provisions harm its credibility and the broader rules-based system, which has served as the foundation of relative global stability for decades. Canada insists on respect for this treaty and the broader international disarmament regime. At a time of increasing geopolitical tension, we must guard against any unraveling of global norms.

Canada continues to stress that international humanitarian law forms the backbone of our disarmament framework. It is IHL that establishes the fundamental principles of distinction, proportionality, and precaution. It is IHL that ensures that human dignity remains central even in the conduct of warfare. And it is through the interaction between IHL and disarmament treaties that we have been able to successfully constrain the most indiscriminate and devastating conventional weapons.

Madame President,

Canada remains committed to working with all partners to uphold and reinforce the norms that protect civilians and promote global peace and security. We recognize and appreciate the particular role of civil society in articulating and defending the norms of the Convention. Over the years, civil society organizations, humanitarian deminers, legal experts, survivors' networks, and advocacy groups have remained steadfast in their commitment to ensuring that the world does not forget the devastating impact of anti-personnel mines, unexploded ordnance, and other indiscriminate weapons. These actors have been tireless in calling upon States Parties to reaffirm their commitments—not only to the Ottawa Convention, but across the whole spectrum of disarmament treaties. Their role has been indispensable.

In conclusion, Madame President,

Canada calls on all States Parties to remain engaged with the APMBC framework, to engage in constructive dialogue, and to work collaboratively to address implementation gaps.

Let us ensure that the hard-won gains of previous decades are not lost, and that future generations inherit a world in which the use of indiscriminate weapons – such as anti-personnel mines – has no place.

Thank you.