

Item 9C: Cooperation and Assistance
Statement Belgium

Excellencies,
Dear members of the mine-action community,

Everybody in this room here today is well-aware of the devastating humanitarian consequences of the use of antipersonnel mines.

At the risk of repeating ourselves: They kill and injure civilians indiscriminately, often years after conflicts end, leaving survivors with life-altering disabilities, such as amputations and blindness. Children are particularly vulnerable, and affected communities live in constant fear, causing deep psychological trauma. Beyond the human toll, mines block access to farmland, roads, and water sources, undermining food security and economic recovery. They force displacement, hinder reconstruction, and impose enormous costs for clearance and medical care, straining already fragile health systems. Ultimately, antipersonnel mines perpetuate poverty and instability, making post-conflict development extremely challenging.

This is why Belgium remains strongly committed to the full implementation and respect of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, as a humanitarian imperative to protect civilians, including children, who are often disproportionately affected.

Madam president,

Although it is better to prevent than to cure, clearing the minefields is one of the essential steps in order to fulfill the Convention's humanitarian goal. Too many deadlines have been missed. This is especially frustrating for countries with relatively minor contamination. Complex factors underly this situation, and a cooperative approach is needed, where affected States and donors work in tandem, based on dialogue and national ownership.

As a dedicated donor to humanitarian mine action, Belgium emphasizes the importance of meaningful and equal participation.

Meaningful and equal participation is not optional—it is fundamental to achieving effective and sustainable solutions. When all voices, especially those of affected and marginalized communities, are heard and respected, decisions become more inclusive, legitimate, and impactful. Participation builds trust, ownership, and accountability, ensuring that humanitarian mine action responses truly meet the needs of those they aim to serve. Without it, we risk perpetuating exclusion and undermining long-term peace and development.

We also want to reiterate our full support to the efforts needed to advance gender equality through the integration of a gender and diversity perspective into Mine Action and as part of the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda by increasing women's participation in mine action, including in leadership's positions.

Belgium's commitment is demonstrated by its in-kind support through capacity building and the sharing of expertise by our Ministry of Defense, facilitated by UNMAS and GICHD, as well

as by Belgium's continued – and increasing – financial support to mine action programs in Syria, Iraq, Ukraine, Cambodia, Angola, Azerbaijan, Lebanon and Senegal.

Madam President,

We congratulate Oman on its announced completion of its mine clearance obligations within the 10-year deadline, becoming the 32nd State Party to fulfil this commitment. We are also greatly encouraged by the news coming from Croatia, regarding its strides towards clearance completion by its 2026 deadline.

We want to thank everyone within the mine action community for their relentless efforts that continue to make a tangible difference in communities affected by antipersonnel mines. Without you this would not be possible.

Thank you, Madam President.