



Statement delivered by South Africa at the Twentieth Meeting of State Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, 1 to 5 December 2025, Geneva, Switzerland

Item 9: (f) Universalizing the Convention

Madam President,

The delegation of South Africa wishes to extend our sincere appreciation to your Excellency, Ambassador ICHIKAWA, the Committee Members, and the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) for the engagements as well and timely preparations for this Meeting of State Parties. Please be assured of our support as you lead these discussions. The statement is aligned to the Africa Group.

South Africa welcomes the ratification of the Convention by the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the accession by the Kingdom of Tonga.

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention has established a basis for peace and security in the disarmament space as one of the Humanitarian Disarmament conventions. It protects lives, and seeks to ensure the safety of humans, and contributes to a more secure world for everyone. The treaty has saved countless lives by preventing deaths and injuries during conflicts, and their impact continues long after the hostilities cease.

At the outset, South Africa expresses its deep concern and regret regarding the recent withdrawals from the Convention, as well as steps that create uncertainty about the continued application of obligations, including references to the suspension of adherence, an approach for which the Convention contains no provision. These developments represent a setback to our collective efforts toward universalisation and risk undermining confidence in the achievements made to date. South Africa encourages all States to remain constructively engaged on these matters at the highest political level and, where appropriate, to promote

respect for and adherence to the Convention through bilateral, subregional, regional, and multilateral dialogue.

Madam President, being a State Party or signatory to the conventions should not be merely a formality. Adherence and Compliance with States' obligation and responsibility is crucial as it represents a significant commitment towards preserving the integrity of the Convention and contributing to enhancing global safety, security and well-being of civilians, especially in the current global environment.

South Africa urges state parties to uphold the commitments they have undertaken in relation to these treaties. These standards and obligations were established to preserve a level of humanity during both peacetime and wartime.

It is of equal importance for all States Parties and stakeholders to proactively promote the Universalisation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention with a sense of urgency. We therefore call on states that have yet to ratify the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention to do so and reiterate our appeal to all non-State Parties to accede to the Treaty as soon as possible. It is imperative that they join the convention and for the State Parties to remain within the convention. Our steadfast commitment to a mine-free world is imperative to alleviate further unnecessary suffering. Universal participation is essential to permanently eliminate this threat.

Madam President, in advancing Universalisation efforts, we reiterate South Africa's unwavering commitment to the Convention's full implementation.

I Thank you.