

Intervention by the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) at the Annual Pledging Conference of the Antipersonnel Mine Ban Convention

9 March 2026

Thank you Mme President.

We are pleased to hear the many pledges of support for the vital work of the ISU as well as the strong statements of support for the convention it services. As you noted, Madame President, progress on the convention relies on the contributions of, and close collaboration among, many actors, and the ISU is a bedrock at the center of these many moving pieces, supporting us all to make maximum progress on the convention's goals.

And today we absolutely need such leadership from a broad range of stakeholders as the norm against AP mines being challenged on several fronts. First, use of antipersonnel mines is at levels not seen at decades, mainly by Russia and Myanmar. The impact on civilians from such use is horrendous, and we know that civilian casualties are likely to rise significantly when people return home after the conflicts end. Any use is inexcusable, and we condemn their use in the strongest possible terms.

Such use is tied to the second major challenge, which is the weakening stigma against AP mines, aggravated by the withdrawal of 5 states from the treaty last year. Since the 1990s, a strong red line had been placed around AP mines use, production, and transfers, which had largely stopped. **But today, that red line is becoming pink, as politicians not just in those 5 countries but in other European states are presenting the case for using mines again.** We are deeply concerned that the use of AP mines could become "normal" again. Already there are reports that two of the states that withdrew are considering producing millions of mines for domestic use and export. We cannot sit by and allow that to happen.

We are also facing concerning compliance developments with allegations of new use by two States Parties. Without getting into the details, we would like to remind states that in order to preserve the integrity of the convention, it is important that all states are treated equally, and that compliance with its provisions is monitored and applied equally, even if the states in questions are close allies or friends.

Finally, we have seen cuts to mine action and victim assistance in 2025 as states shift priorities and military budgets increase. Today we call on all donors, big and small, to **step up, pitch in and fill the gap.** In this context, rapid progress on a **voluntary trust fund** has become even more critical as a way to facilitate contributions from new and smaller donors.

We ask you to be as generous as possible in these difficult times - for essential mine action operations, for victim assistance, for the excellent work of the Implementation Support

Unit, but **also** for **research and advocacy conducted by civil society**, which supports progress on implementation, and brings the experiences of mine affected communities to states, but also works to ensure that **no new mines are put into the ground**.

In conclusion, I have outlined several challenges, but difficult times also provide opportunities for renewal and positive change, as long as there is strong leadership backed by effective coordination. With this in mind, we hope this meeting is a success, and the ISU receives the funds it needs to continue providing its vital services. We all rely on the ISU, and the ICBL is grateful for the close and constructive relationship we have had with the ISU Director and all its staff for many long years. Today more than ever we need the sense of community and commitment, matched by strong financial and political support for the treaty, that has helped the Mine Ban Treaty be a success for almost 30 years.

Thank you.