

**President of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Regional  
Dialogue on Sustainable National Capacities, Residual  
Contamination, and Victim Assistance San Salvador,**

**5 May 2026**

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, colleagues, and friends,

It is a great honour to open this Regional Dialogue here in San Salvador. Allow me first to express my deep appreciation to our hosts, the Government of El Salvador, and in particular to **His Excellency Dr. Félix Ulloa**, Vice President of the Republic of El Salvador, for his leadership and for welcoming us so warmly to this country that has long been a champion of peace, reconciliation, and support to survivors.

I also wish to thank the **European Union**, represented today by **Ambassador Duccio Bandini**, for its steadfast commitment to the Convention and for the generous support that has made this regional dialogue possible. The EU's investment in the implementation of the Siem Reap–Angkor Action Plan is helping States Parties translate commitments into real, measurable progress.

I also recognize the important work of the Veterans and Ex-Combatants Benefits Administration Institute lead by **Dr. Daniel Platero**, we certainly look forward to learning more about your work.

And I am especially grateful to the representatives of civil society and survivor networks joining us today. Your presence reminds us why this Convention exists. I warmly acknowledge **Ms. Mileiny Ramírez**, whose voice and experience speak to the human impact of mines and the importance of ensuring that survivors are at the centre of our work.

Colleagues,

The Americas hold a unique place in the history of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. This region—particularly Central America—was

among the first to demonstrate that peace, political will, and national ownership can transform mine-affected countries into mine-free countries. Today, **Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador, Suriname, and Chile** stand as examples of what determined national action can achieve.

Their experience is invaluable. They cleared their territories, strengthened national institutions, and built systems that continue to protect communities long after the last mine was removed. Their leadership is the foundation upon which this dialogue is built.

At the same time, several States in the region—**Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Argentina**—continue to implement their Article 5 obligations. Their progress, challenges, and innovations will enrich our discussions over the next three days. This dialogue is an opportunity to learn from one another, to identify practical solutions, and to reinforce the shared responsibility we all have to ensure that no community is left behind.

Excellencies,

The Siem Reap–Angkor Action Plan calls on us to ensure **sustainable national capacities**—capacities that remain in place *after* completion, so that countries can respond to **residual contamination**, newly discovered hazards, or new threats, including improvised devices acting as anti-personnel mines. This is the focus of today’s sessions, and it is a critical one.

Completion is not the end of the story. It is the beginning of a new phase of responsibility.

We will hear from States that have completed clearance about how they maintain institutional memory, manage data, train personnel, and ensure rapid response mechanisms. These lessons are essential for States nearing completion, and for those planning their long-term arrangements.

Tomorrow, we will turn to **victim assistance**, a pillar of the Convention that reflects our collective commitment to human rights, inclusion, and dignity. The Americas have much to offer the world in this regard. El Salvador's integrated model—combining rehabilitation, psychosocial support, and socio-economic inclusion—is a powerful example of what national leadership can achieve. Survivor networks across the region have also shown how peer support and community-based approaches can transform lives.

The Siem Reap–Angkor Action Plan reminds us that victim assistance is not a temporary activity. It must be embedded in national systems—health, disability, social protection, education, and employment—so that survivors can thrive on an equal basis with others.

Finally, on the third day, we will look ahead: What are the next steps for the Americas? How do we consolidate progress, close remaining gaps, and ensure that this hemisphere becomes the first in the world to be free of anti-personnel mines, with survivors fully included in society?

Colleagues,

This dialogue is not just a meeting. It is a reaffirmation of our shared commitment to the Convention and to the people it exists to protect. I encourage all delegations to engage openly, share experiences, and explore practical avenues for cooperation. Myself and the ISU stands ready to support you in this effort.

Before I close, allow me to thank El Salvador once again and the Institute for the Administration of Benefits for Veterans and Ex-Combatants for their support in hosting this event.

Let us use these three days to strengthen our collective resolve, to learn from one another, and to advance together toward a hemisphere free of mines—where every survivor has the opportunity to live with dignity, inclusion, and hope.