

# The Fourth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention - Oslo, 25-29 November 2019

Agenda Item 6 “Renewing the political commitment to the Convention”

## **Statement of the Republic of Bulgaria**

Mr. President,

Allow me to express Bulgaria’s sincere gratitude for your devotion and leadership that guided us towards a successful conduct of the Fourth Review Conference. Our delegation highly appreciates the dedicated preparatory work and the exemplary efforts of your team and the Implementation Support Unit throughout the year.

We would also like to convey our high appreciation to the Kingdom of Norway for its warm hospitality.

Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union. Nevertheless, I would like to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

The Fourth Review Conference marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Ottawa Treaty entry into force. Over this period, the Convention has achieved a substantial progress in its mine action activities and has played a fundamental role in humanitarian action. Hereby, the Convention has established itself as an essential and powerful mechanism in the disarmament area more broadly.

Our country was amongst the first State Parties and, fortunately, a lot more followed, to fulfill its Article 4 obligations and to destroy its national anti-personnel mine stockpiles back in 2000. In 2015 the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria adopted a Law on the Implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Ottawa Treaty. The Bulgarian legislation incorporated principles and rules of international humanitarian law and fully defended the rights of all APMs victims and survivors.

Along with the successful implementation of the tasks at national level and the full compliance of Bulgaria with the provisions of the Ottawa Convention, we stand ready to assist others by sharing know-how, good practices and lessons learned from mine destruction and national legislation.

As a State Party we share the concerns over the magnitude of the anti-personnel mine contamination in certain regions of the world and its significant humanitarian and social-economic impact on the local population. Our delegation is also deeply disturbed over the anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature and their growing and extensive use, especially by non-state actors,

as they raise humanitarian concerns and pose security challenges. We strongly support the shared comprehension that the Convention applies to all APMs including those of an improvised nature.

To adequately address the challenges posed by large mine-congested areas and improvised anti-personnel mines, all State Parties must strive for a universal adherence to the Ottawa Treaty. Universalization is an absolute necessity in order to guarantee enhancing the implementation of the Convention. We encourage all states, not yet parties, to accede to the Ottawa Treaty.

Bulgaria subscribes to the Oslo Declaration and expresses its full support of the Oslo Action Plan 2020-2024, and especially those actions related to universalization of the Ottawa Convention and to the newly emerging challenges posed by improvised APMs. We strongly believe that these two Fourth Review Conference documents will guide the State Parties over the next five years in their continued efforts to secure a mine free world.

Mr. President,

The increasing use of APMs of an improvised nature, the growing number of mine-affected victims and the mine legacies of past conflicts, and the present ones, demonstrate that humanitarian concerns are still relevant to mine action activities. Countering these challenges in pursuit of mine free world demands resolute commitments and undisputed determination by the State Parties and enhancement of their efforts.

Hereof, Bulgaria would like to reaffirm its strong commitment to the implementation of the Ottawa Convention and to reaching the shared goal of a world free of landmines by 2025.

