

29/11 AM



Statement by Ms. Charlotte Skerten

**Fourth Review Conference of the
Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
General Statement**

29 November 2019

Thank you Mr President

It has been moving to hear, during the course of this week, stories from survivors of landmine detonations, and inspiring to hear from several high-level speakers – our special envoys for the Treaty included – who have all demonstrated their heartfelt commitment to the Convention’s humanitarian goals, and their dedication – against the odds – of achieving a mine-free world.

But in the same breath, it has been tragic to hear breaking news from mine affected states this week of further civilian deaths. These stories have solemnly highlighted the true human cost were we to fail to achieve our Matupo goal on time. But we must not fail. We must again commit to delivering a mine free world by 2025.

New Zealand, is pleased to have supported mine clearance in a number of the most heavily mined areas of the world: Afghanistan, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Palestine and Colombia as well as in some less internationally prominent – albeit still significantly impacted areas – including in the Pacific. We also contribute to a variety of programmes run by the ICRC and the UN Mine Action Service.

But there is still much work to be done. Over the next five year period, we will need our community to come together to make clear, concrete and time-bound plans for how each contaminated area will become mine-free. We have seen evidence of good progress on this being made this week. It is also clear

that the increasing number of improvised mines must be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Until it is possible to safely clear minefields, risk education plays a crucial role for communities in mine-affected areas. The Oslo Action Plan outlines a number of important actions on mine risk education. We congratulate the membership on the adoption of this Action Plan. It will help save lives and bring us closer to achieving a mine-free world by 2025.

Finally, Mr Chair, we wish to record our deep appreciation for the tireless efforts of our civil society partners for the role they play in advocating for mine action. New Zealand wishes to congratulate the ICRC and the Norwegian Red Cross on the launch of their holistic “Risk Awareness and Safe Behaviour” approach, and welcomes the establishment by UN agencies and international NGOs, of the Explosive Ordinance Risk Education Advisory Group. Both endeavours aim to ensure that risk education programmes suited to the particular demographics of the local community, including taking account of gender and diversity. As set forth in the working paper introduced by Finland, it is important that we ensure our mine action efforts take a much greater account of gender inclusive perspectives, and as such, we welcome this paper for starting the conversation on this most important issue.

Thank you.