

Oslo, 29 November 2019

Statement of the Polish Delegation

*Mr President,*

At the outset let me thank Norway for its hospitality and congratulate you, Mr President, your team and the Implementation Support Unit for your efforts with regard to the fourth review process of the Convention. I assure you of my delegation's support and cooperation throughout this Conference. We wish you to conclude this meeting successfully.

I would like to align Poland with the statement delivered by the European Union during the general debate and wish to add the following considerations in a national capacity.

This year we celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. The adoption of the Convention was a great achievement of international community. We perceive the Convention as an important instrument of International Humanitarian Law. Mine action plays a critical role in the peace and security agenda and significantly contributes to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We are very glad that the number of State Parties to the Convention raised to 164, which is an encouraging result.

We highly appreciate the work carried out by the Norwegian Presidency to prepare the outcome documents and would like to recall the EU position on this issue adopted by the Council of the EU on 25 June 2019. The Oslo Political Declaration on a Mine-Free World reaffirms strong commitment of States Parties to the rules-based order and encourages to further multilateral efforts on disarmament. The Oslo Action Plan addresses all aspects of Convention's implementation. It can serve as a useful guidance in pursuit of the common goal of an anti-personnel mine-free world.

We would also like to emphasize the importance of greater participation of women in the implementation of the Convention. The gender mainstreaming activities should complement priority areas of the Convention which are: universalization, mine clearance, requests submitted under Article 5, victim assistance and reporting.

*Mr President,*

Poland finalized the process of destruction of stocks of anti-personnel mines in 2016, more than a year before the official deadline. The Polish Armed Forces did not retain any anti-personnel mines for the development of and training in mine detection, mine clearance, or mine destruction techniques. Long before becoming the State Party to the Convention (in 2012), we had been fulfilling (on the voluntary basis) most of its provisions including memorandum on production, export and transfers and delivering assistance to post-conflict recovery areas and contributing to alleviate the humanitarian problems caused by unexploded ordnance and landmines, being engaged in missions abroad particularly under the United Nations, NATO and the European Union auspices. Today, Poland has at its disposal training centers that offer demining programmes for military experts, which are open to the international cooperation.

Since 2015 Poland supports financially the efforts of UNMAS in Gaza to protect civilians, including women and children, humanitarian personnel and peacekeepers from the threat of mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW). Our contributions enable UNMAS to strengthen its clearance operations, deliver risk awareness messaging to local communities and UN personnel and to eliminate development barriers. The Government of Poland also maintains its financial support to the global coordination role of UNMAS.

The Convention and its machinery can rely on our assistance by participating in work of Coordinating Committee. We also continue to

provide the Implementation Support Unit with funds necessary for its functioning.

*Mr President,*

The ongoing impact of existing contamination and the new large-scale contamination by anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature are worrisome. The most effective way to reverse this trend and bring the number of casualties to as low as possible level, is to make the Ottawa Convention fully universal and its norms widely respected.

Apart from the legal actions there are other ways to improve situation of people potentially exposed to consequences of use of anti-personnel mines.

Prevention and education remain one of the primary tasks in reducing number of mine victims. We note with sorrow the recent statistics which prove that around 50 percent of victims of mines were children. In 2017 men and boys made up 87% of all casualties of mines. In this context gender perspective means using different education measures for boys and different for girls are of the utmost significance.

*Mr President,*

All these important processes require proper funding. In this vein, we call State Parties to the Ottawa Convention to pay their contributions in full and on time to allow for an effective work of all disarmament regimes.

Let me finish, Mr President, by wishing you and all distinguished participants of this event constructive and forward-looking discussions. We do believe that the Fourth Review Conference will bring tangible progress towards a mine free world.

I thank you.