



Statement by Ambassador Andrej Benedejčič, Special Envoy of the Foreign Minister, at the Fourth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction, Oslo, 29 November 2019

Mr. President,

My country attaches great importance to mine action. This is not only because Slovenia is a responsible member of the international community, but also because its recent historical experience has brought it in direct contact with the "silent killers", as land mines are ever so aptly called. In addition to the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union, I would therefore like to make several points in my national capacity.

Mr. President,

The impressive amount of humanitarian work that has taken place since the signing of the Ottawa Convention makes it one of the most successful international agreements in the disarmament area. This is something that we need to bear in mind, even as we face a surge in mine victims across the world. The answer to this challenge should be a political recommitment to the Convention and a redoubling of efforts at its universalization.

As we rededicate ourselves to creating a mine-free world we should bear in mind that its mutually supporting pillars are mine clearance, victims' assistance, mine risk education and advocacy. In other words, every removed mine, every rehabilitated mine survivor and every mine awareness workshop represent equally important and mutually interlinked steps along the path to a future that is both safer and more prosperous.

It is also for this reason that more than twenty years ago the Slovenian Government established the International Trust Fund. Better known by its acronym, the ITF, its main goal was clearing the Western Balkans of the scourge of antipersonnel mines. In the course of time, ITF extended its activities to Enhancing Human Security across the world, including through mine risk education. Of course, none of this would have been possible without the generous assistance and support of numerous donor countries. ITF's success is therefore also their success.

One of the areas where the ITF, with the support of the Government of Slovenia, is increasingly active is in promoting a gender perspective. My country therefore supports the inclusion of gender specific actions and indicators in the Oslo Action Plan, as well as gender mainstreaming in the Committee structures. These are all important steps in ensuring that mine action operations better represent the concerns and priorities of women and girls. In the same vein, Slovenia also calls for the inclusion into the Political Declaration of a reference to the respect of international law, including human rights law and international humanitarian law.

Let me conclude by reiterating my country's commitment to the Ottawa Convention and the vision of a mine-free world by 2025. This goal is all the more important since it would also contribute to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Slovenia has therefore decided to back the important work of the Implementation Support Unit of the Convention for the period 2019-2021 through a voluntary contribution.

Thank you.