



Statement by Mr. Nicholas Clutterbuck

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

26 November 2019

Thank you Mr President

Please allow me to congratulate you, Ambassador Brattskar, on your assumption of the Presidency of this most important Review Conference, and welcome, too, the nomination of each of your Vice-Presidents and the Secretary-General of the Conference. Norway has played a guiding role in this Convention ever since its adoption in Oslo 22 years ago. We are confident that Norway's vision and demonstrated commitment to this treaty will help generate the drive and dynamism necessary to reinvigorate our progress towards mine-free world. We welcome the open and transparent way you have approached your Presidency and look forward to working with you this week to achieve a wide array of successful outcomes.

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention is one of the most successful multilateral disarmament treaties. With 164 States Party, and widespread political will among us, we must continue to chart a course towards a fully universalised vision of a world free of landmines by 2025.

Our Treaty is more relevant now than ever. Last year, almost 7,000 people were killed or maimed by mines or explosive remnants of war. It is deeply unfortunate that, due to the nature of conflicts around the world today, we have seen a significant increase in the number of casualties in active conflict zones. Of course, the indiscriminate and deeply inhumane killings that result from anti-personnel landmines can also continue to take place many years after a conflict has faded. Tragically the number of civilian and, in particular, child, casualties has also continued to increase. Sixty million people continue

to live in constant risk of anti-personnel landmines. Accordingly, the need for universalisation of our treaty, and the achievement of a mine-free world, remains very clear. As the Norwegian Foreign Minister said at last night's opening reception: "Landmines are not [yet] an issue of the past".

New Zealand was one of 122 states that signed the Convention on its opening day in Ottawa on 3 December 1997. Over the past twenty years, we have urged non-States Parties to join with us in becoming part of the Treaty's membership. And yet, a number of key current and past producers of landmines still remain outside of our group. The Treaty's membership must give due consideration as to why this is the case and how it can be changed. Perhaps we can use the opportunity of this Review Conference to intensify an exploration of whether targeted approaches to significant non-Parties might serve to amplify the dialogues which we know you, Mr President, and our past President – Austria – have been leading on. Each of us – individually and collectively – must certainly also do what we can to encourage universalisation of this Treaty.

In New Zealand's own region, the Pacific, we have been active in deepening understanding, implementation and universalisation of the Convention, together with our close neighbour Australia. Last year, we held a regional conference in Auckland on a number of conventional weapons treaties, including the APMBC, which was attended by 14 Pacific Island Countries. The "Auckland Declaration" – our outcome document from that meeting – highlighted the "very wide support in the [Pacific] region for this ... Convention and its humanitarian objectives".

It is a reflection of our region's desire to show global solidarity with landmine-affected states and to build momentum towards a truly universal norm against these weapons that all but three states in the Pacific are party to the Convention. We hear that competing priorities, resource constraints and reporting obligations are the main reasons why the Convention is not fully universalised in the Pacific. Reporting requirements can be particularly arduous for some small Pacific Island states, some of which even require

Cabinet to approve their reports before they can dispatch them. We are therefore trialling an alternative reporting format between some of these existing States Parties and the ISU, and we look forward to receiving feedback on this approach in due course.

We also remain concerned that 34 States Party still have outstanding destruction obligations under Article 5: 40% of those States which have clearance obligations under the Treaty. While we are conscious of the many challenges associated with clearance and the destruction of mines, and acknowledge that the Convention permits extension requests in certain circumstances, we must not become complacent about the large number of extension requests – including recurring requests. Should it continue, this trend may undermine the whole ethos of our Convention and devalue the norm it has established. It is our expectation that states which have had extension requests approved over the past 12 months should have made concrete progress towards addressing their remaining challenges relating to landmines so that they would shortly be in a position to submit detailed plans for mine clearance and destruction, in the event they have not yet done so.

Mr President, the course which we 164 current States Parties chart towards universalisation of our Convention must continue to include our joint condemnation, in the strongest terms, of any use of anti-personnel landmines in any form, by any one, anywhere. New Zealand urges all non-States Parties to this Convention to join as soon as possible.

Thank you.