



Statement of the Netherlands
under agenda item 7 (c) on
Clearing mined areas
Fourth Review Conference of the
Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

Thank you Mister President,

Since the Third Review Conference, significant progress has been made to clear areas from anti-personnel mines, which cause so much human suffering. With three more countries being declared mine free in the past five years, we are closer to a world free of mines. Nonetheless, the Netherlands is troubled by the increased contamination in certain states, mainly as the result of the increased use of mines of an improvised nature.

The Netherlands would like to reiterate that mines of an improvised nature that meet the Convention's definition of an anti-personnel mine, fall under the obligations of the Convention. We thank the ICRC for their informative paper regarding this issue and are supportive of the recommendations contained in the paper. Therefore, States Parties that discover these mines should report this to the Convention and file an extension request in accordance with Article 5.4.

We would like to commend Nigeria for being proactive in this matter during the 2019 Intersessionals and recognizing the fact they have found improvised mines in their territory. We hope that next steps will be taken to ensure that these improvised mines will be dealt with in accordance with the processes established by the Convention. We urge other States Parties encountering comparable situations

to undertake similar actions. Only with acknowledging the issue regarding these anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature can the international community assist with clearing them.

In clearing contaminated land, we would like to emphasize the importance of conducting mine clearance in an effective way by optimal use of new technologies and methodologies, for example on land release via non-technical survey. Additionally, when clearing anti-personnel mines, including those of an improvised nature, safety and security of personnel remains of utmost importance. This means using up-to-date standards that take into account the different contexts and purposes in which clearance takes place. In this regard, we take note of the completion of the United Nations Improvised Explosive Device Disposal Standards, coordinated by UNMAS, that are applicable where the context or mandate is not humanitarian. We have also supported the update of the International Mine Action Standards with regard to improvised explosive devices, which serve as the guiding framework for humanitarian mine action operations. It is crucial that these documents guiding clearance serve as the basis for the Oslo Action Plan on how to effectively clear contaminated land and reduce victims.

Another important aspect of reducing victims of landmines is mine risk reduction and education efforts. When clearing mined areas is not a possibility, we should at least extend a helping hand to the civilians living in close proximity to these areas. By providing the means to these civilians, whether in the form of educational programmes or other programmes aimed at ensuring the decrease of risk of falling victim to landmines, lives are saved. The Oslo Action Plan should include the wide variety of factors that can contribute to creating a greater understanding of the risks mines pose.

Thank you, Mister President.