

Statement on Clearance
16th Meeting of States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty
19 December 2017



Thank you Mr Chair.

We warmly congratulate Algeria for completing clearance since we last met in Santiago. We also note that Mozambique promptly reacted to newly found contamination and was able to once again declare completion of clearance this year.

In 2016 vast areas of land were cleared in Afghanistan, Croatia and Cambodia. Meanwhile, no clearance took place in States Parties Ethiopia and Serbia, and no information was shared on activities in States Parties Eritrea and Nigeria. Only four States Parties seem to be on track to meet their respective clearance deadlines. Now is the time for many to shake up and to take the necessary measures to implement completion plans. These plans should include a commitment to make the best possible use of land release methodologies; they should be reviewed regularly to reflect the most up-to-date data; and they should comprise a resource mobilization strategy and the dedication of national funding. We were delighted to hear many statements of support for the goal of 2025 yesterday, and we want to know what concrete steps *all* States Parties will take to reach that objective.

Meeting our collective goal of 2025 requires a country-by-country approach to identify unique challenges and solutions. In this respect we welcome the “individualized approach” events on Sudan and Zimbabwe held this year. We also remind stakeholders to consider assessments of and recommendations for national mine action programs as found in “Clearing the Mines”, a publication of the Mine Action Review, and in the Landmine Monitor.

Mr Chair -- Improvised explosive devices that can be activated by the presence, proximity or contact of a person meet the definition of an antipersonnel mine and are covered by the Mine Ban Treaty. This means that a large part of the contamination by IEDs is actually antipersonnel mine contamination. States need to report on it under Article 7, and they need to include such contamination in clearance plans under Article 5. Treating IEDs as a separate

issue denies the existing machinery and mechanisms of the Mine Ban Treaty. Some states have chosen not to use the humanitarian disarmament framework provided by the Mine Ban Treaty to address what they call the “IED threat” and instead pursue non-binding measures through the Convention on Conventional Weapons. This is short-sighted, misguided, and costly. It also ignores a key opportunity to remind non-state armed groups of the stigma that the Mine Ban Treaty has created against any use of antipersonnel mines.

Mr Chair -- States Parties have agreed to Article 5 as a legal framework for mine clearance, and it is only fair to ask that all States Parties respect it equally. Those that have declared completion of mine clearance in past years -- or whose deadline has passed -- but that are still finding antipersonnel mine contamination on their territory should be assigned a new deadline through the extension request process.

Thank you.