

Statement by Canada

17th Meeting of the States Parties of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

26 November 2018

Chair,

On behalf of Canada, I wish to assure you of our support.

As a major long-term donor to mine action in Afghanistan, we congratulate you for the successful and complete transfer of responsibilities for the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan from the UN Mine Action Service to the Afghan Directorate for Mine Action Coordination, which is now responsible for managing the most enduring mine action program in the world.

Canada remains fully committed to working towards the universalization of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and we continue to find encouraging new signs of progress. We are pleased to note the number of delegations and organizations highlighting the gender perspectives of mine action. Canada believes that humanitarian assistance, security, and development work, that is inclusive, and both gender- and diversity-sensitive, helps rebuild societies, and enables sustainable peace. We look forward to furthering this approach throughout the week.

Last year in Vienna, we applauded Sri Lanka's accession to the Convention as its 163rd State Party and then again when it joined the Convention on Cluster Munitions in March of this year.

Thanks to rigorous reporting by the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, most recently evidenced by the 2018 edition of the Landmine Monitor, we also know that funding for mine action in 2017 reached its highest levels ever recorded, totalling more than US \$771 million.

As a member of the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance for the last two years and with an eye on the 2019 Review Conference, we encourage States Parties to continue building on this collective momentum.

Significant work lies ahead however if we are to achieve the goal of a mine free world by 2025 that we signed up to in Maputo. New mines continue to be laid and we must not lose sight of the considerable legacy contamination that remains in many parts of the world.

Canada remains concerned by the new use of antipersonnel mines by government forces in Myanmar, as well as by non-state armed groups in Afghanistan, Colombia, India, Myanmar, Nigeria, Pakistan, Thailand and Yemen. We condemn all use of anti-personnel mines and call on any States that are using them to cease doing so and to join the Ottawa Convention without delay.

We also remain alarmed by persistently high mine casualty rates which despite being slightly lower in 2017 than the recent record high of 2016, this year comprised a higher ratio of civilians – 87 per cent – and the highest numbers ever recorded for child casualties. These troubling statistics should also serve as a rallying call to urgent action.

Chair,

Let us recall that this Convention was founded on humanitarian principles. Mine action is not just our pathway to putting an end to the indiscriminate effects and human suffering caused by these cruel weapons. It is also a comprehensive framework to remediate landscapes and enable healing after conflict by restoring access to productive land, water, resources, education and essential services to millions of people around the world.

As part of our ongoing commitment to addressing the impacts of anti-personnel mines and explosive remnants of war, Canada contributed \$14 million to mine action in 2017 and committed \$17.2 million in our current fiscal year for this work. This includes funding of major projects in Afghanistan, Colombia, Iraq, Sri Lanka, Syria and Ukraine.

We encourage all States Parties to join in the ambitious pursuit of the 2025 goal of a world free of mines. We will only succeed on the strength of our collective effort.

Thank you.