

Address by the Finnish delegation  
Sixth Annual Pledging Conference for the  
Implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

23 February 2021

Mr President,

I would like to begin by thanking Her Excellency Kitty van der Heijden, Vice Minister for International Cooperation of the Netherlands, for her remarks and congratulate the Netherlands for taking over the Presidency of this important Convention. You can rest assured of Finland's support to your work during the upcoming year. In addition to the EU statement to be delivered later today, I would like to make some remarks in my national capacity.

Mr President,

The past year has been a challenging and difficult one, also for the mine action community. Field operations have been heavily impacted because of the measures that needed to be taken in order to curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Restrictions on people's movement and ability to convene have forced our partners to look for new and innovative solutions on the ground in order to keep the staff and beneficiaries safe while continuing to deliver on ambitious targets. At the same time, the international community has had to adjust to meetings and decision-making in a distant mode.

The situation has created many insecurities for operators in the sector. As there is pressure to direct more funds towards national pandemic responses in donor countries, we need to make sure that we do not lose sight of the long-term development and goals we want to achieve with mine action. In these difficult times, it is of utmost importance that we continue to demonstrate our engagement and support to those working on the ground and to states working towards fulfilling their obligations under this Convention.

I am proud to note that Finland also lives up to this commitment and has decided to go ahead as planned with a 25% increase in our resources for the next five-year period. After a successful call for proposals last summer, we are continuing our support towards mine action in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Somalia and Ukraine with projects worth of 15 million euro during 2021-2025.

In addition to this contribution and as in previous years, I am pleased to announce that Finland will pledge **10 000 euros** in voluntary support to the Implementation Support Unit. We look forward to continuing our dialogue and good cooperation with the ISU, the Presidency and all States Parties of the Convention.

Thank you Mr President.

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