

**BELGIUM**

**7<sup>th</sup> Pledging conference**

**APMBC – 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022**

Madam Chair,

Allow me first to congratulate you on assuming the Presidency of our Convention. Belgium wishes you full success and support in your endeavor and looks forward to working with you closely. Moreover, my delegation would like to thank you and the ISU for organizing this important pledging conference in order to strengthen our convention.

Belgium aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union and wishes to make the following remarks in its national capacity.

Belgium is strongly committed to the full implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. This **commitment takes various forms**, as we believe the challenge of a mine-free world is to be addressed in multiple places.

Here **in Geneva**, Belgium has the honor to **chair the Committee on Article 5** implementation, and to engage, together with France, Iraq and Sri Lanka, with numerous affected States Parties.

Most of the States Parties we engaged with, are facing technical difficulties, as well as a **lack of resources**. While Covid-19 increased scarcity in resources both for affected and donors States, our common aim to have a mine-free world requires all States Parties to **keep maintaining a high level of involvement**. In this regard, my delegation is pleased to mention that in 2021 Belgium decided to extend its aid to the **mine clearance** efforts of UNMAS in Iraq and Syria with a new contribution of **two million EUR**. Last year, we also approved a donation of half a million EUR to the humanitarian demining program of Norwegian People's Aid in Angola.

Moreover, over the past years, Belgium has provided **funding for victim assistance**, inter alia through the **ICRC's Special Appeal**: disability and mine action (1 mln EUR in 2020; 1 mln EUR in 2019; 500,000 EUR in 2018...), contributing to the empowerment of mine victims and survivors.

Finally, our convention would not be able to work effectively without a **robust and efficient ISU**. My delegation would like in this occasion to **thank the Director of the ISU, M. Juan Carlos Ruan, and his whole team**, for their tireless efforts in order to ensure the full implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

The support of the ISU both on the field and in Geneva is crucial. In this regard, Belgium is pleased to mention that it made a voluntary contribution of 300.000 euros end of 2021.

My delegation therefore wants to take this opportunity to encourage all States Parties to financially contribute to mine action, including to the needed and excellent work of the Implementation Support Unit.

I thank you Madam Chair