



**STATEMENT BY THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA ON
BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP DURING THE GENERAL
DEBATE AT THE 21ST MEETING OF STATES PARTIES TO THE
ANTI PERSONNEL MINE BAN CONVENTION**

**20 TO 24 NOVEMBER, 2023
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND**

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP STATES PARTIES TO THE
CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION, USE, STOCKPILING, PRODUCTION
AND TRANSFER OF ANTIPERSONNEL MINES AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION,
GENEVA, 20 TO 24 NOVEMBER, 2023**

Mr. President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of African States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Antipersonnel Mines and on their Destruction.

Foremost, the African Group wishes to congratulate you, Ambassador Thomas Gobel, on your deserving election to chair this 21st Meeting of States Parties, and to thank your country for its commitment to the efficient operation of this convention in line with the Oslo Action Plan (OAP).

In the same context, we also congratulate Members of the Bureau on their election and express gratitude for the considerable efforts made, together with respective Committees throughout this year. We are confident in your ability to steer the proceedings of this Assembly to a successful outcome and we assure you of our full support and cooperation.

Mr. President,

The African Group has always expressed its interest in the objectives set out in points 3 and 4 of the Oslo Action Plan concerning, in particular, technical cooperation and constructive dialogue with States affected by mines as well as the promotion of education on mine risks and the adoption of safe behaviors to save lives.

Furthermore, the Group also attaches particular importance to the strengthening of cooperation and international assistance, which is the subject of point 6 of the OAP, which encourages States Parties to comply with the obligations of the convention as soon as possible. We believe that in order to achieve the clearance of all contaminated areas, the participation and involvement of all States parties are absolutely essential. This will make it possible, in particular, to take advantage of the technologies available for detecting and demining.

Mr. President,

The African Continent is united around the issue of mine action. Our united voice paints a picture of what we desire for ourselves, for future generations and the Continent as stated in the agenda 2063 entitled, The Africa we want and the African Union Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silencing the Guns in Africa, which has been now been extended till 2030.

This engagement is clearly reflected through, the Common African Position on Anti-Personnel Landmines, the AU Mine Action and explosives remnants of war strategic framework and the relevant decisions of the AU Peace and Security Council, including its recent communique adopted on 1 April 2022, in commemoration of the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action.

Mr. President,

A large majority of African Union member States, precisely fifty-one (51) out of fifty-five (55) states, are parties to the Convention, and it remains our hope that States who are yet to join the Convention, would do so without further delay. Nonetheless, our huge Membership to the Convention largely reflects the will of the African continent to put an end to the scourge and devastating effects of antipersonnel mines, the unacceptable injuries caused to innocent civilians including the rendering of mined areas unusable while also entrenching poverty in the affected areas decades after armed conflicts.

Cognizant that African States Parties to the Convention have continued to make efforts to integrate the provisions of the Convention and its implementation into national development plans, efforts to ensure the consideration of sex, age, disability and needs of people in affected communities despite the Pandemic context have also been considered.

In this context, the African Group attaches particular importance to: Promoting universal observance of the standards and objectives set by the Convention; Strengthening technical cooperation and constructive dialogue with mine-affected States; Promoting mine risk education and adoption of safe behaviours to save lives as well as Strengthening international cooperation and assistance to meet the obligations of the Convention within the shortest time possible.

Mr President,

The African Group calls for better synergy and collaboration to promote support and advance the care, rehabilitation including social and economic reintegration of mine victims. We also prioritize mine risk education and reduction programmes as well as the removal and destruction of anti-personnel mines placed or stockpiled throughout the world. In addition, we are of the view that strengthening international cooperation and assistance, as essential elements required for the continued success of the Convention cannot be overemphasized.

We further call for better collaboration to further improve assistance to implement the Convention and facilitate mobilization of necessary support as well as resources to alleviate the burden of states affected by mines.

In conclusion, Mr. President, Our region is proud of the contribution of African countries to the work of the Convention, namely Algeria as Vice-President of the 20th MSP and Chair of the Committee on Victim Assistance, Sudan as Vice-President of the 20th MSP and member of the Committee on Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance, Uganda as member of the Committee on Victim Assistance and South Africa as a new member of the Committee on Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance.

I thank you