

Twelfth Meeting of the States Parties of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction

Geneva, 3–7 December 2012

Statement by Finland

Mr. President,

Finland fully aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union.

At the outset I would like to congratulate you on your election as Chairman. Please be assured of Finland's full cooperation in your task to lead the discussions and deliberations in this meeting.

Mr President,

Finland is happy to address this meeting today for the first time as a full member of the Ottawa Convention. All national constitutional measures were finalized and the Convention entered into force for Finland on 1 July 2012. I am also happy to announce that Finland will shortly be delivering its initial report in line with Article 7 of the Convention to the United Nations Secretariat.

Finland has always had a responsible mine policy. Our mines were acquired for defensive purposes only and they have been stored in stockpiles that are in the possession of the Finnish Defense Forces. The destruction of Finland's stockpile commenced shortly after the entry-into-force and we will have finalized the destruction of our APM stockpile by the end of 2015. There are no minefields in Finland, we do not produce anti-personnel mines and we have never exported them. We have also supported humanitarian mine action projects since 1991, for more than twenty years now.

As a member of the Ottawa Convention, Finland will follow this same responsible policy. We will fully comply with the Convention as we have done with all other arms control and disarmament agreements we have joined.

We join others to promote the universalisation and implementation of the Convention, as they still are as important as they have been during the existence of the Convention. In addition to the work done by Member States, also the work of the non-governmental organizations have been instrumental for the universalisation of the Convention.

Mr. President,

Finland considers humanitarian mine action as an integral part of early recovery and support to partner countries' long-term rehabilitation and development efforts. Humanitarian mine action plays an important role in the transition from conflict to sustained peace. Integration of a mine action in a country's poverty reduction strategy and development plans is a prerequisite for achieving the objectives of the Ottawa Convention.

Finland's support to humanitarian mine action since the early 1990's has been a total of 81.6 million euro. During recent years, the level of funding has been around five million euro annually. We intend to increase mine action funding, subject to parliamentary approval, to reach the level of 6 million euro annually by 2014.

We have supported mine action in several countries, mostly in Africa and Asia, through our reliable partner organizations. Support by Finland is based on a comprehensive, holistic approach. This includes mine detection and clearance, assistance in the care, rehabilitation as well as social and economic integration of mine victims, and the support to mine awareness projects, including Mine Risk Education. For us, these elements are mutually reinforcing and complementary. As demining will continue to be a challenge both in scale and complexity, we must mobilize new donors to support humanitarian mine action.

Thank you, Mr. President.