

**BELGIUM**

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

**APMBC – 24<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

Mister 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 and to keep maintaining a high level of involvement in order to move towards a mine-free world as soon as possible. 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 had the honor to participate in the work of its Victim Assistance and more recently Article 5 implementation Committees. We then had the opportunity to engage with numerous affected States Parties and discuss the challenges they are facing in implementing our Convention, with, as core-challenge for many of them, a lack of resources.

To address this issue, **Belgium's support takes various forms**. We are pleased to mention our **2 million EUR direct support to UNMAS** mine clearance and MRE operations in Iraq and Syria as well as our **3.9 million EUR contribution** to the mine clearance, MRE and Victim Assistance activities of **Apopo, HI and MAG** in Syria, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, DRC, Angola and Cambodia.

Besides these direct fundings, Belgium contributes to **multiple flexible funds** like, for instance, the **Country Based Pooled Funds** (CBPF's) and the **Central Emergency and Response Fund** (CERF) out of which amongst other humanitarian mine action activities are financed.

Belgium also directly supports mine clearance operations **through capacity building efforts** provided by its armed forces via UNMAS and **demining equipment sent to Ukraine** for a total amount of 2.75 million EUR.

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. This is not only relevant taking into consideration the new contaminations we have witnessed the last couple of years, but also **with regards to the upcoming Review Conference** of our Convention to be held in 2024. In this regard, Belgium is pleased to mention its 300.000 EUR contribution to the ISU budget in 2021.

My delegation therefore wants to take this opportunity to encourage all States Parties to contribute to mine action activities, whatever the form this contribution might take, and including contributions to the needed and excellent work of the Implementation Support Unit.

I thank you Mister Chair