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**Swedish Presidency  
of the European Union**

**Second Review Conference  
Of The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention  
Cartagena (Colombia), 30 November - 4 December 2009**

**Statement by**

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**on behalf of the European Union**

**Cartagena, Colombia, 3 December 2009**

**APLC Second Review Conference  
Cartagena, Colombia  
(30 November - 4 December 2009)**

**EU statement**

Mme President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The Candidate Countries Croatia\* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*<sup>1</sup>, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia align themselves with this declaration.

The Cartagena Summit is our joint opportunity to renew a strong and continuing commitment towards a world free of antipersonnel mines without any new mine victims, and where sustainable care and support to their re-integration in the society is provided for the victims.

During its lifespan the Convention has seen substantial progress. Today 156 states are parties to it. There is general adherence to its provisions also by non-States Parties. Most States Parties have successfully destroyed their stockpiles of antipersonnel mines. Vast areas have been cleared, thereby releasing land for farmers to till, children to play and enabling socio-economic growth for local communities. Casualties are at a level far below earlier estimates of more than 20.000 per year, with recorded casualties down to under 5.200 during 2008.

We are on the right track - but thousands of victims, most of them civilians and among them many children, are still claimed by mines and other explosive remnants of war every year. A substantial number of States Parties remain with their obligation to clear mined areas; the number of requests for extension of clearance deadlines is higher than anticipated. Many of these states need help to clear and release suspected areas. Some States Parties face substantial challenges in order to destroy their stockpiles. We are faced with several States Parties now being in breach of the article 4 requirement on stockpile destruction.

Other serious challenges remain. A number of states are still not parties to the convention; many of these states face an unstable regional situation. Mines are still stockpiled and armed non-state actors make use of them. The European Union recognises the importance of engaging armed non-state actors with the objectives of this Convention. We support the work of "Geneva Call" and its efforts to ensure compliance by non-state actors with the norms of the Convention.

The European Union has been promoting adherence to the Convention through a series of regional workshops, as well as technical assistance visits to a number of State Parties which had requested specific help in addressing implementation challenges. We are committed to continue to assist those State Parties which have not yet met their obligations under article 4 and 5 of the Convention. At

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<sup>1</sup> \* *Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.*

the same time, such assistance must be provided within an appropriate financial and legal framework. In this regard, national ownership is critical for reaching the objective of full compliance to the Convention.

Maybe the most daunting challenge for many states is to live up to their responsibilities to mine victims. Assistance to mine victims needs to be integrated into the broader policy dialogues with states with significant numbers of such victims. The recent study “Voices from the Ground”, by Handicap International, shows that a majority of survivors feel their needs have not been taken into account and that their voices have not been heard.

Mme President,

Antipersonnel mines and explosive remnants of war continue to inflict death and injury. They hinder reconciliation, stabilisation and economic recovery and place a heavy burden on poor countries around the world. This is why, for the European Union, mine action remains a key priority. Since the adoption of the Convention, the European Union - its Member States and the European Commission – have made a major contribution to the elimination of mines and the alleviation of their negative human impact. Mine action has been part of bilateral and Community external assistance programmes in third countries, including activities such as mine clearance, stockpile destruction, mine risk education and mine victim assistance, rehabilitation and socio-economic re-integration. In financial terms, Member States and the European Commission have committed 1,8 billion Euros for the period 2002 to 2009.

This has made the European Union the largest contributor to mine action worldwide.

However, mine action is more than a purely humanitarian concern, although humanitarian considerations remain as relevant as ever. Today, mine action is to a lesser extent carried out in the immediate aftermath of armed conflict. It has rather become part of states’ development efforts, for example to enable the development of agriculture and infrastructure.

In the view of the European Union, mine action needs to be fully integrated into the development dialogue. Only in this way will we be able to tackle the remaining challenges, such as un-cleared land and assistance to victims. This is also the way for mine action to regain its momentum, to ensure that necessary resources are mobilized.

A more long term development focus in mine action calls for enhanced coordination of efforts. The need for more effective delivery and use of international aid has been manifested in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, and the subsequent Accra Agenda for Action, endorsed by developing and donor countries. Donors and recipient states need to have an increased focus on the linkage between mine action, development and aid effectiveness. The European Union calls on all parties to increase their efforts in this regard.

National ownership is key to handling the remaining challenges to reaching the goal of a mine free world. To achieve effective victim assistance and mine risk education countries’ own health and social systems need to be strengthened, education and labour markets should integrate opportunities for persons affected by mines. In this context, the European Union wishes to emphasize in particular the importance of a human rights perspective in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

These tasks must be given priority in national and international development plans. Donor countries, the United Nations and other international organisations should support and strengthen these government systems. Through inclusive partnerships between donors and affected countries constructive ideas can be developed and concrete action carried out in support of all those girls, boys, women and men affected by mines.

Mme President,

The European Union commends you and our Colombian hosts for making this Summit such a memorable event through your excellent preparations, effective leadership and warm hospitality. The Cartagena Declaration will inspire our work for the years to come in implementing the Convention. The Cartagena Action Plan will serve as an excellent tool in our renewed commitment and shared responsibility to end the suffering that antipersonnel mines have caused, and continue to cause.

Thank you.

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