

Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
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High-Level Segment

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Excellencies, dear colleagues,

Mr President,

Let me take this opportunity to thank you and all those involved in the preparation of this meeting for the excellent arrangements and the great hospitality shown. It is a great pleasure for me and my delegation to be here in Maputo, the capital of Mozambique with which my country has such close collaboration. This year it is exactly 50 years ago since Sweden started to provide support to the independent Mozambique, through a grant to the Mozambican institute in Dar-es-Salaam. In 2013, Swedish overall assistance to Mozambique came close to 100 million Euros (885 million SEK).

Let me also take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr President, on your election and assure you of my delegation's full support. I would also like to commend the Director and staff of the ISU for their excellent work throughout the history of this convention.

Mr President,

Sweden stands fully behind the statements made by the EU. I would like to provide some additional perspectives from a national point of view.

Sweden has its own history with regards to anti-personnel mines. We were active in the 1990s within the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) to put in place the Amended Protocol II on the Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-Traps and Other Devices. For us it was key that the largest producers and users of mines were involved in the process. But anti-personnel mines weren't weapons that were used by great powers only. They were everyman's weapon - and the consequences of their use was - and is - horrific. It became increasingly clear that these weapons were indiscriminate and that they indeed couldn't be used in accordance with IHL.

Sweden as a country outside military alliances and with defence forces shaped to deter an invasion of a large territory, had partially relied on anti-personnel mines. At the same time, no manufacture or exports of these weapons had taken place for decades. The political momentum for a total ban on anti-personnel mines grew internationally and in Sweden. In 1996, the Swedish parliament took the decision to ban the use of anti-personnel mines by the Swedish armed forces. This included the

destruction of existing stockpiles. Sweden could thus join the other 121 States that signed the Convention in Ottawa in December 1997. We have always been proud of that decision.

Mr. President,

Five years ago in Cartagena, Sweden had the great honour to speak on behalf of the EU. Like the EU today, we were very pleased to be able to state that the EU and its member states together were the largest contributor to mine action worldwide. We are very pleased that this hasn't changed.

Humanitarian considerations remain as relevant as ever for mine action. But mine action today is to a lesser extent carried out in the immediate aftermath of armed conflict. It has rather become a more integrated part of States' development efforts, to enable agriculture and the build-up of infrastructure. In alignment with principles raised within international aid effectiveness processes – for example as expressed in the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action – Sweden believes that the national ownership and the political will of the cooperation partner countries is key to achieving sustainable development.

In our view, mine action needs to be fully integrated into the development dialogue. This is the way to tackle remaining challenges such as uncleared land and assistance to survivors. This is also a way for mine action to regain momentum, to ensure that necessary resources can be mobilized.

Here in Mozambique, Sweden has acted in line with this view and contributed, through the UNDP, to a substantial programme of mine action within the framework of Mozambique's 2011-2014 Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, which emphasizes the importance of addressing the mine contamination problem as an integral part of achieving sustainable economic and democratic development. Sweden has contributed more than 8 million EUR or 70 million SEK to these efforts in the last couple of years.

All in all, Sweden has contributed over 100 million EUR to mine action worldwide over the last decade. Our support administered mainly by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) has gone to mine action in its wider sense - to clear all ERW including cluster munitions. It has in recent years been focused mainly on demining and mine awareness, also advocacy. Besides Mozambique, major support has been provided to projects and activities in Iraq and South Sudan. We have also funded projects in Colombia, Afghanistan and Cambodia. Humanitarian Mine Action has been carried out in the Republic of Congo, Libya, Mali, Central African Republic, Palestine and towards the situation in Syria. We continue to support the Convention's International Support Unit, which does a fantastic job.

Mr President,

It is gratifying to see that the rights perspective increasingly is becoming an integral part of the mine survivor agenda. The Convention of the Rights of persons with disabilities has played a key role in fostering this perspective which emphasizes a person with disabilities as a subject which has rights instead of the out-dated perspective of a disabled person as an object which should be taken care of by benign benefactors. A rights perspective has been instrumental in moving the accessibility agenda forward in many countries worldwide.

Accessibility in all its aspects also requires a socio-economic rights perspective. The right to affordable health care, and affordable aids so that everyone in need of equipment such as crutches, wheelchairs and prostheses can acquire them is fundamental to this perspective. Every person who can function as a productive member of society also contributes to the overall welfare of that society.

Sweden doesn't distinguish between the development aid that we provide to mine survivors in accordance with the Conventions we are party to, and the support we provide to the health care sector as a whole in mine affected countries. Swedish support to sustainable health care, infrastructure and personnel, and to medical education, training and services in such countries and as part of their own development strategies exceeded altogether 127 million USD between 2007 and 2011.

Mr President,

A Review Conference is of course a time to take stock of where we are as States parties, and where we have to go in order to meet the objectives set out for us in the Convention. The proposals that you have made, Mr President, about the coming review cycle - the important goals set out in the Maputo Action Plan and the proposals for improvement of the machinery - are key to the continued and future implementation of the Convention. The suggested new ways of dealing in a more cooperative way with issues such as compliance and extension requests constitute valuable contributions to the spirit of cooperation upon which the Convention's work is based.

We are pleased to see that these proposals have met with strong support.

To conclude, I would like to assure you, Mr President, as well as all States Parties and partners in the UN system and in civil society, of our continued support for this Convention and for its implementation.

Thank you.