

Statement by Ambassador Stefano Toscano, Director of the GICHD

Third International Pledging Conference for the Implementation of the APMBC
Palais des Nations, Room XII, 27 February 2018

Madam President,

The GICHD is committed to supporting the APMBC implementation machinery, and particularly the Implementation Support Unit, which is delivering unflinching support to States Parties.

The Centre is proud to host and support a well-functioning and cost-efficient ISU, in accordance with the agreement between the States Parties and the GICHD. **Since many years, and thanks to the support by Switzerland, the GICHD provides in-kind support to the ISU** such as office space and IT infrastructure – at no costs to States Parties.

In addition, our respective mandates provide a conducive framework for cooperation. For example, **the ISU and the GICHD have joined forces on several occasions to support States Parties in the development of their mine action strategic plans.**

Let me highlight the case of Zimbabwe, which elaborated recently its first national mine action strategy for the period 2018-2025 with the support of the GICHD. Zimbabwe's strategy is, essentially, a 'completion strategy'; accordingly, it was important for its development to be synchronized with that of Zimbabwe's extension request – with the two processes benefitting one another. As such, the GICHD circulated the draft national strategy to the ISU for feedback and contributed to reviewing the extension request.

This collaboration at strategic level is set continue in the coming years – again with the Centre supporting both the drafting of national mine action strategies as well as the development of extension requests.

Also, building on the success of the annual Afghanistan Coordination Workshop supported by the United States (which brings together representatives of government, operators, UN and donors), the GICHD is on standby to **consider supporting the organization and facilitation of similar country-focused events** should an appropriate opportunity arise, including as a result of or in connection with individualized approaches.

Madam President,

Strong national ownership and strategic plans are instrumental in allowing States to meet their completion targets under the Convention. We look forward to continuing working with affected countries and the APMBC implementation machinery to that effect.