

Opening Remarks by H.E. Dr. Ly Thuch

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At the “Seminar on Alternatives to Using Live Anti-Personnel Mines Retained for Permitted Purposes”

21 June 2024, At 9:00-17:00

Hôtel Royal Genève, Geneva, Switzerland

Ladies and Gentlemen, esteemed colleagues, honored guests, and dear friends,

Good morning and welcome to the Seminar on “**Alternatives to Using Live Anti-Personnel Mines Retained for Permitted Purposes**”.

It is an honor to stand before you today as the President of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, and I am delighted to see such a diverse and committed gathering of experts and state representatives.

Our presence here today highlights our shared commitment to the humanitarian goals of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

This historic treaty, which aims to eliminate the use, stockpiling, production, and transfer of anti-personnel mines, remains a cornerstone in our collective efforts to end the suffering caused by these inhumane weapons.

Since the Fourth Review Conference in 2019, we have made notable progress, yet significant challenges persist.

As of today, the Convention has 164 States Parties, reflecting remarkable international commitment.

However, the continued use of anti-personnel mines poses a grave challenge to our efforts.

Furthermore, the stagnant rate of new accessions to the Convention highlights the need for increased dialogue and engagement.

Today's seminar focuses on a key aspect of our work under Article 3 of the Convention: **the retention of anti-personnel mines for permitted purposes such as training and research, and exploring viable alternatives to the use of live anti-personnel mines.**

This discussion is timely and necessary.

Sixty-four States Parties currently retain mines for these purposes, with the number of mines varying widely.

Our goal is to ensure that these numbers do not exceed the minimum **absolutely necessary** and to explore alternatives that can mitigate risks associated with live anti-personnel mines.

We acknowledge that while the retention of live anti-personnel mines for training has its practical advantages, it also carries significant risks.

Improper management systems and ineffective inventory controls can lead to devastating accidents.

Thus, it is imperative that we explore and adopt safer, yet effective alternatives.

Innovative methods such as the use of inert mines, surrogate mines, and advanced simulation technologies have shown promising results and merit our serious consideration.

Throughout the day, we will hear from a range of experts and practitioners who will share their insights and experiences.

We will explore topics such as the risks associated with live mines in storage, best practices in mine management, and the latest advances in training techniques using non-live mines.

I encourage all participants to engage actively in these discussions, share your perspectives, and ask questions.

Dear Colleagues

Our collective wisdom and cooperation are vital in overcoming the challenges we face.

Let us use this opportunity to strengthen our commitment, enhance our strategies, and reaffirm our dedication to a world free from the threat of anti-personnel mines.

I would like to express my gratitude to the ISU for organizing this seminar in support of the Presidency, and to the European Union for unwavering support.

The EU has been a major donor in mine action globally, providing significant financial assistance and support to mine-affected regions.

We are particularly grateful for the EU's Position Paper supporting Cambodia's Presidency of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and

for the statements during the Intersessional Meetings, which reinforce our shared goals and commitment.

Together, let us continue to work towards the complete eradication of anti-personnel mines and the realization of a safer, more secure world for all.

Thank you.