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## Opening remarks by Ms Greta Zeender

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Mr. President, Excellencies, Colleagues,

I would first like to thank the Presidency, the Implementation Support Unit and my colleagues at the GICHD for all their work in organising these meetings.

We should be proud of the great successes achieved through this Convention. Yet, anti-personnel mines still cause disproportionate harm to civilians, hamper the enjoyment of fundamental human rights, and hinder recovery, reconstruction and sustainable development.

The Fifth Review Conference is a crucial opportunity to ensure that the Convention keeps pace with evolving needs and challenges and contributes to advancing broader humanitarian, development, and peace efforts. Allow me to share a few ideas on areas to prioritize in the next review cycle:

First, modern IMAS-compliant land release methodologies have enabled the safe, efficient and effective release of contaminated areas. However, the land release approach is not applied consistently in all affected areas; also, survey and clearance operations are often hampered by access difficulties due to security, geographic or climate conditions. We must continue to disseminate best practices to target land release efforts more effectively. Understanding what all reasonable effort means in a specific national context is vital in this regard, to support States in achieving article 5 completion with maximised results and efficient use of resources. The Technical Note on Mine Action “All Reasonable Effort” of 2021 provides guidance on how this concept can be applied.

Second, early planning for completion underpins solid exit strategies, ensuring adequate capabilities and resources remain to address residual contamination. The Siem Reap Action Plan could provide guidance on planning the transition to a reactive phase of residual contamination management, based on early analyses of the national context, the institutional, legal and operational frameworks that need to be in place after completion. The GICHD will

continue supporting requesting States on these issues, through trainings, technical advice on strategy and standards development, and tailored information management solutions.

Third, we welcome the sector's increased attention to environmental and climate considerations and support the addition of related references in the Siem Reap Action Plan, especially concerning stockpile destruction, survey and clearance. However, we should be mindful that taking account of climate and environmental factors may affect the timing and cost of operations. Donors should also be encouraged to contribute to the development, promotion and uptake of methods and technologies respectful of climate and the environment, as lack of resources or expertise might pose a serious challenge in many countries.

Fourth, risk education is critical to save lives. Major steps have been made towards professionalising EORE since the adoption of the OAP, including updates to international standards, use of new technologies and strengthened outreach, also through collaboration with the humanitarian sector. Individually and as a member of the EORE Advisory Group, the GICHD has contributed to these advances through sector mappings, e-learning programmes, the dissemination of good practice, and the provision of tailored technical advice.

The Review Conference could help to overcome persisting challenges, to ensure that RE is adequately funded and reported on by affected States, and that national ownership of RE programmes is increased, notably through needs assessments, strategic planning, and quality management.

The GICHD also welcomes the steps made towards greater gender and diversity mainstreaming since 2019. As a member of the Gender & Diversity in Mine Action Working Group, the GICHD has a strategic commitment to gender equality and believes in the need to maintain this progress through enhanced commitments on gender equality and inclusion in the Siem Reap Action Plan.

Finally, linking APMBBC implementation to human rights, humanitarian, development and peace efforts, promises to make mine action more impactful and better integrated within national responses framed by global agendas. This has the potential to strengthen coherence, open new funding lines and help with prioritization. The GICHD has launched a Global Impact research project to analyse the connections between mine action and global agendas, including on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS), disarmament, and sustaining peace. The

study, to be launched this year, will include recommendations on how best to integrate mine action into these broader national efforts.

The GICHD will also launch soon a series of Analysis Briefs focusing on these and other issues relevant to APMBC implementation, with the aim to contribute to the outcomes of the 5<sup>th</sup> Review Conference.

Mr President,

The APMBC remains central to reducing the horrors of landmines and ensuring the safety and dignity of people around the world. At a time when multilateralism and International Humanitarian Law are increasingly under pressure, we must do all in our power to reaffirm and strengthen the norm against antipersonnel mines and invest the necessary resources to fully implement this historic treaty.

I wish us all a successful and fruitful intersessional meeting.

Thank you.