



Intersessional Meeting of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

Statement delivered by Mr. Edson Asgarov Attaché of the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the UN Office and other International Organizations in Geneva

Geneva, 20 June 2024

Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption as the President of the 5th Review Conference and assure you Azerbaijan's full support to your mandate.

Ottawa Convention has greatly contributed to addressing the humanitarian concerns caused by anti-personnel landmines since 1999. Azerbaijan endorses the purpose and objectives of the Convention and underscores its commitment to promoting international peace and security by eliminating the threat posed by anti-personnel mines and supporting humanitarian efforts to resolve these concerns.

As a result of 30 years conflict, Azerbaijan suffers from mine pollution problem and stands among the most heavily mine-contaminated countries of the world. According to initial estimates, roughly 12 per cent of the country's territory is polluted by 1.5 million mines and an unknown number of unexploded ordnances.

Unfortunately, the number of mine victims is growing due to Armenia's refusal to provide the accurate maps of the mines it planted across Azerbaijan's territory.

Since 2020, 361 of our citizens, mostly civilians, have fallen victim to mine explosion, resulting in 68 deaths and 293 severe injuries. Over the last 30 years, the cumulative toll of landmine victims in Azerbaijan has reached 3,440.

Mr. President,

While addressing its mine problem, Azerbaijan has simultaneously launched multiple initiatives to rivet the international community's attention to this matter.

Last year our country has officially declared humanitarian demining as the 18th National Sustainable Development Goal, and we are working to ensure its recognition as the UN's Global 18th SDG.

In the meantime, Azerbaijan, in its capacity as the Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) has launched an initiative to establish a Special Contact Group on Humanitarian

Demining within the NAM. The Contact Group has begun operating since the last September.

Mr. President,

We are grateful for assistance provided to Azerbaijan, and we are eager to collaborate with potential donors and organizations willing to support demining operations in the country. We believe that the United Nations and its specialized agencies such as UNMAS could also play a role in mobilising international support for demining operations in Azerbaijan.

Challenges we face also hinder our development and recovery efforts, creating serious obstacles for the return of 800 thousand formerly displaced people.

We would appreciate practical assistance for demining efforts of Azerbaijan. Given Azerbaijan's relatively developed institutional capacity and training frameworks, the most critical form of assistance needed at this juncture is direct financial donations to amplify the scope of operations.

Other priorities include mine victim assistance, technical surveys and feasibility studies, data management and technological advancements, implementing geo-spatial methodologies and technology layering to refine clearance needs, support for female demining teams, mechanical demining enhancement, mine detection dogs training, demarcation and fencing, and explosive ordnance risk education.

We would like to call on all State Parties to support Azerbaijan's mine action efforts as a matter of human solidarity.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, Azerbaijan has always attached importance to humanitarian concerns arising from the use of anti-personnel landmines and stands ready to support international efforts contributing to this important goal.

I thank you.