

**Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
Twenty-second Meeting of the States Parties**

Statement under agenda item 9(f) Universalizing the Convention

Izumi Nakamitsu*
High Representative for Disarmament Affairs

As delivered



2 December 2025
Geneva, Switzerland

*Joint statement on behalf of the United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action

Madam President¹,

I deliver this statement on behalf of the Principals of the United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action (IACG-MA)² which includes UNMAS of DPO, UNDP, OCHA, OHCHR, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN-Women, UNOPS, FAO, WFP, WHO and my office, UNODA.

Excellencies,

Anti-personnel landmines protect no one. They don't distinguish between a soldier on the move, a child on the way to school, a farmer tending their field, or a humanitarian worker delivering assistance. These weapons kill and maim indiscriminately, during hostilities and long after the fighting has ended. They threaten food security, obstruct humanitarian access, impede social and economic recovery, and inflict lasting psychological harm.

This is precisely why 166 States – more than three-quarters of United Nations Member States – chose to ban these weapons. For 25 years, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention has provided a robust and effective legal framework, saving countless lives and allowing communities to rebuild. Casualties from antipersonnel mines have declined, their production, transfer, and use have dropped, and a powerful global norm against these weapons has firmly taken root. This is our shared achievement and progress continues.

¹ H.E. Ms. ICHIKAWA Tomiko, Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Permanent Representation of Japan to the Conference on Disarmament, President of the Twenty-second Meeting of the States Parties (22MSP).

² The United Nations Departments and Offices of the Secretariat, specialized agencies, funds and programmes are: the United Nations Mine Action Service of the Department of Peace Operations (UNMAS-DPO), the Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and the World Bank are observers.

We warmly welcome the recent accessions by the Republic of the Marshall Islands and by the Kingdom of Tonga. Their decisions reaffirm the Convention's strength and importance. We also commend the President of the Twenty-Second Meeting of States Parties, the Committee on Universalization and the Implementation Support Unit for their sustained efforts to further advance universalization of the Convention.

Excellencies,

Despite being one of the most successful humanitarian disarmament treaties ever adopted, the very foundation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention is now at risk. We deeply regret the decisions to withdraw from the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. We also regret the announcement to suspend the Convention's operation - a step not allowed for under the Convention.

These unprecedented developments pose a grave threat to civilians and mark a dangerous retreat from international humanitarian law. We must reject the notion that respect for this treaty - or for IHL more generally - can be subordinated to security or defence considerations. Such reasoning strikes at the very purpose of these rules: to reduce human suffering exactly when conflict breaks out, including in the most challenging and exceptional of circumstances.

We recognize the growing insecurity faced by some States. Yet it is precisely when civilians are most at risk that States must uphold, not weaken, humanitarian disarmament treaties. This is the time to reinforce global commitments to the protection of civilians.

Excellencies,

The limited military utility of antipersonnel landmines has not changed since the Convention was adopted in 1997.

Military experts agree that advances in military technologies and the evolution of warfare have rendered antipersonnel mines even more redundant. In other words, leaving the Convention provides no military advantage. What it does risk, however, is the erosion of long-standing humanitarian norms against indiscriminate weapons.

In the face of these challenges, the Twenty-Second Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention is a critical opportunity to reaffirm the Convention's purpose, uphold the integrity of international humanitarian law, and to reinforce the stigma against anti-personnel landmines. Through his campaign on humanitarian disarmament and mine action, the Secretary-General has stressed the urgency of the matter and called for collective action.

We urge States to reverse any withdrawal, to firmly reject the false choice between military necessity and international humanitarian law, and to recommit to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. We call on the States not yet party to join without delay, and on States Parties to fully implement their obligations under the Convention.

Excellencies,

To abandon the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention at a time when it matters most is to betray the very people it was created to protect. Honoring its promise of a mine-free world is our shared responsibility – a duty to uphold humanity everywhere, in all circumstances.

Thank you.
