

---- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY ----

Opening remarks by Ambassador Tobias Privitelli GICHD Director

Intersessional Meeting of the APMBC, Geneva, 15 June 2026

Madam President,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to address you at the opening of the 2026 Intersessional Meetings of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

I would like to thank Ambassador Tembo Luambia for her stewardship of our work. Let me also thank Director Juan-Carlos Ruan and his team for their constant dedication in supporting the implementation of the convention and for an excellent cooperation.

I would like to warmly congratulate Lebanon on depositing its instrument of accession to the Convention on 1 May this year. This is brilliant news.

Lebanon's accession is an important achievement, not only for the Convention, but for the broader humanitarian disarmament agenda.

As a country directly affected by conflict and contamination, Lebanon's decision sends a particularly powerful message. It reminds us that commitment to humanitarian norms can persist even in the most difficult circumstances.

Lebanon shows that protecting civilians and strengthening security can go hand in hand. Its accession is a powerful reaffirmation of the Convention's humanitarian purpose.

I also wish to congratulate Croatia for completing its obligations under Article 5. Croatia has been declared mine-free earlier this year. Croatia's achievement stands as an impressive testament to what political commitment, national

ownership and international cooperation can accomplish. It is a reminder that the Convention does not simply establish obligations; it delivers results.

Madam President,

Excellencies,

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention remains one of the most efficient and successful humanitarian disarmament instruments ever negotiated. For nearly three decades, it has saved lives, reduced suffering, returned land to productive use, supported survivors, and protected civilians.

It remains a powerful international norm against the use, production, transfer and stockpiling of anti-personnel landmines.

The GICHD remains deeply concerned by withdrawals from the Convention, by the suspension of treaty obligations by some States Parties, and by recent announcements concerning the potential production of anti-personnel mines in Europe.

These developments risk undermining decades of collective progress. They also come at a time of increasing humanitarian needs, challenges to the rules-based international order and rising numbers of explosive ordnance victims.

The Convention mattered when it was adopted 29 years ago. It still matters today.

Madam President,

We welcome this meeting's focus on how to translate the commitments of the Siem Reap-Angkor Action Plan into concrete implementation, to ensure that we deliver lasting benefits for affected people and communities.

To do so, we must continue to advance clearance efforts, while also investing in mine risk education and victim assistance.

We must strengthen national ownership and national institutions in order to create the conditions for sustainable responses.

And we must ensure that countries possess the national capacities, systems and partnerships required to manage residual contamination, respond to future risks, and protect their communities over the long term.

Effective implementation also requires that no one be left behind. Experience has repeatedly shown that mine action is most effective when it is inclusive.

Understanding the different experiences, needs and priorities of women, men, girls and boys, as well as persons with disabilities and affected communities, is not simply a matter of principle. It is essential to ensuring that risks are properly understood and priorities accurately identified.

Simply put, inclusive approaches make mine action more effective.

Finally, implementation requires long-term investment and sustained resources to achieve lasting impact. The GICHD therefore welcomes the work undertaken to explore the feasibility of a Voluntary Trust Fund and the commitment of States Parties to identify new ways of supporting affected countries that struggle to attract sufficient international assistance. The GICHD is honored to host a small secretariat which elaborates innovative finance solutions for the mine action sector. The objective is to maximise the impact of available resources.

Madam President, Excellencies, Colleagues,

The Convention has demonstrated that humanitarian action, international cooperation, and political commitment can produce lasting results.

The challenges before us are significant. Yet, one of the lessons of the Convention's success is that progress cannot be taken for granted. The achievements of the past three decades were not inevitable. They are the result of sustained commitment, continued investment, and the determination of States Parties and partners to translate the imperative of humanitarian protection into action.

As His Royal Highness Prince Mired reminded us at the Twenty-Second Meeting of States Parties, complacency is not an option.

I wish you all productive and successful meetings.

Thank you.