Thank you, Chairperson,

The Antipersonnel Mine Ban Convention, or Mine Ban Treaty, is widely known as the most successful multilateral disarmament treaty due to its widespread adherence and commendable, life-saving achievements. Other disarmament and arms control instruments can and should continue to learn from the Mine Ban Treaty’s successes.

Nevertheless, work remains to be done, and great vigilance and strategic actions are needed to avoid the Treaty slipping off track or into complacency.

The increase in use of improvised mines (otherwise known as IEDs) and the fact that they account for a majority of casualties reported in recent years, is of major concern. These weapons fall under the Mine Ban Treaty remit and are covered by its clearance obligations, its international cooperation and assistance framework, and its transparency and reporting measures.

Any use of antipersonnel mines, including those of an improvised nature, is banned and should be strongly condemned. We call on the few states still not party to the Treaty to join the rest of the international community to rid the world of these inhumane and immoral weapons and provide assistance to the countless victims and survivors who have suffered and continue to suffer from their impact.

Efforts must be redoubled to ensure medical care, psycho-social support and socio-economic inclusion of victims, survivors and their families. The rights of victims and survivors must be equally protected in keeping with the principles of impartiality, non-discrimination and neutrality.

Another major concern facing the Treaty and requiring immediate collective action, is the slow pace and extensive delays in land clearance. An alarmingly high number of States Parties have failed to respect their obligation to clear land “as soon as possible.” Despite improvements in survey and clearance techniques over the past twenty years, the majority of affected States Parties, including those with small to medium amounts of contamination, continue to miss their own clearance deadlines and request further extensions. This delay results in ongoing negative humanitarian impact.

Only a handful of mine-affected States are on track to meet their current deadlines, or the aspirational 2025 clearance completion goal, reaffirmed by States Parties at
the 2019 Review Conference. This worrying trend risks exposing communities in affected States to grave danger for many years or decades to come.

On a brighter note, despite ongoing challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the mine action community has proved innovative and resolute in its commitment to carry out life-saving activities. It is of utmost importance that predictable, stable funding continues unabated to support meeting key Treaty obligations such as land clearance, victim assistance and risk education.

We call on all states to:

- Vote in favour of the UNGA resolution on the Mine Ban Treaty and encourage others, such as regional group members, to do so as well;
- Condemn any use of antipersonnel mines, including of an improvised nature, and reiterate that any use of landmines by any actor, under any circumstances is unacceptable;
- Promote the Mine Ban Treaty by engaging bilaterally in discussions on universalisation and implementation of the Treaty;
- Promote gender, age and disability inclusiveness throughout Treaty implementation, and;
- Continue providing institutional, financial and human resources to ensure full implementation of the Treaty on the ground, including sustainable assistance to victims.

We thank the Netherlands for their leadership this year, as President of the Mine Ban Treaty. We look forward to a productive Meeting of States Parties next month in The Hague and progress in implementing the Oslo Action Plan adopted at the 4th Review Conference in 2019, and we look forward to all efforts towards finishing the job of clearance completion by 2025.

I thank you, Chairperson