

Fostering Partnerships

**Global Conference on Assistance to Victims of Anti-Personnel Mines and Other Explosive
Remnants of War, and Disability Rights.
10-12 September 2019 - Intercontinental Amman, Jordan.**

**Supported by EU Council Decision 2017/1428 in support of the implementation of the Maputo
Action Plan for the implementation of the 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use,
Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction**

*** * ***

**Speech by Head of Delegation of EUDEL Amman H.E. Ambassador Maria HADJITHEODOSIOU at the
opening session Tuesday 10 September 9:00 AM 2019 in Amman.**

Your Royal Highness

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

I want to thank and congratulate HRH Prince Mired, the Jordanian authorities and the ISU team for the organisation of this global Conference. I also want to thank all participants for joining us today. Most of you have come from very far. I especially want to thank participants with disabilities who were able to join us. I know that you have many more abilities than disabilities. But I can only imagine that travelling long distances, often in narrow airplanes, is not the easiest of tasks. So thank you very much for making this effort, because *your* participation in this event is crucial.

The EU is a long-term partner of Jordan, cooperating in a wide range of fields including security and assistance to persons with disabilities. We welcome the aim of this conference to reinforce the partnership and bridge the Mine Ban Convention – including its obligation to assist victims of explosive mine violence – and the rights of persons with disabilities more broadly. The EU is proud to be part of this global movement seeking to end the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines.

In 2017 the Council of the EU decided to support efforts to implement the Mine Ban Convention with the help of the Convention's Implementation Support Unit. This conference is one of the highlights of this effort. It is a follow-up of the Conference

held in Medellin, Colombia, in 2014, entitled 'Bridges between Worlds'. Prince Mired also attended this Conference. In fact, I cannot emphasise enough the EU's great appreciation for the efforts of HRH Prince Mired, who has done so much for the promotion, implementation and universalisation of the Convention.

This Convention is in fact very close to the heart of the EU and its Member States. All 28 EU Member States have joined it. The EU also has a long history of assistance for mine action covering all key aspects – mine clearance, risk education, victim assistance, stockpile destruction and capacity building. In the back of the room you will find a brochure with an overview of EU support for mine action across the world. There's also a version in Arabic.

For the past 18 months, the EU has supported national stakeholder dialogues in places like Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraq, Senegal, South Sudan and Uganda so that all parties responsible for the wellbeing of mine-affected communities and survivors can better address the challenges they face through strengthened dialogue and partnerships. We will continue to support these States as they revise or develop inclusive national action plans.

The EU is looking forward to the Review Conference of the Ottawa Convention that will take place in Oslo in November, under the able Chairmanship of HE Ambassador Hans Brattskar. I am delighted to see that Ambassador Brattskar is among us today. Since June, the EU has been calling for a strong reference to victim assistance in the Oslo Action Plan that will come out of the review Conference. For the EU, victim assistance is a core component of its Mine Action assistance.

In order for victim assistance efforts to be sustainable in a long run, they need to be integrated into broader disability policies. The EU therefore supports States Parties to embed victim assistance in an integrated policy linked with national policies on human rights and the rights of persons with disabilities as defined in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Ladies and gentlemen

I'd like to end on a broader note, regarding the rights of persons with disabilities. Both the European Union and all its Member States are parties to the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities.

Persons with disabilities are one of the most vulnerable groups, often the poorest in their communities. They face multiple barriers to fully realising their rights and live with dignity. Inclusion and non-discrimination are at the core of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and persons with disabilities are mentioned in seven SDG targets.

We have a responsibility towards a billion persons with disabilities worldwide, 80% of whom live in developing countries, to make sure that EU policies and programmes comply with the Convention's provisions on the full range of civil, political, social, and economic rights of persons with disabilities. We have committed to this in the 2017 European Consensus for Development and will use the full range of instruments at the EU's disposal – from development cooperation to human rights dialogues with partner countries, from project aid modalities to budget support operations – to do so. The European Union is already a major donor and active supporter of the social inclusion and human rights of persons with disabilities in partner countries, with more than 400 disability-specific projects in over 100 countries since 2010.

We look forward to hearing from experts, decision-makers and persons with disabilities, including mine survivors, from all over the world for the coming three days, with a view to further exploring answers to challenges and learning from good practices.

Thank you.
