

## **Young Women Leaders' Statement to the 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty**

Mr. President, Your Excellencies, all the friends of the Mine Ban Treaty.

Thank you for the opportunity to address this important meeting.

We, the Young Women Leaders, come from different countries, organizations, and backgrounds but face one universal problem, and have one common goal which unites us.

Landmines are not a matter of the past, they are still here. They do not choose their victims, nor do the victims choose their destiny. This should be a strong concern for us all, especially when the vast majority of victims and survivors are civilians.

We saw you and your work here, and saw the importance of the international community coming together to make political changes. We ask you, the Governments, to set concrete strategies for reaching your 2025 goals, implement the Maputo Action Plan, and provide the space for youth to contribute to the process. As young people we know that this problem can be solved in our lifetime and we are committed to working with you to finish the job for a landmine free 2025.

That is the reality we want and it is a reality that is possible. We would like to congratulate Sri Lanka, Belarus and Algeria for their recent achievements, and we urge others to use these examples as an inspiration.

We want to highlight the fact that even when we meet all the 2025 targets, and we get to live in a mine-free world, we will still

not live in a mine victim-free world. Survivors are at the heart of the treaty and should continue to be a focus of our work.

We are young women, we are acquiring experience in mine action and we are aware of the global challenges that we are all facing. But challenges can be met, and we are raising our voice against this inhumane and banned weapon.

Finally, we have given a lot of thought to the role of women in the process and our role as young women in it, and we have come to the following conclusion:

When people ask why the focus on young women? Our answer is, Why not? Women have always been at the forefront of the campaign, and they will always be.

Let's build a mine-free world together. Thank you.