Thank you Mr. Chair

The International Campaign to Ban Landmines is a coalition of NGOs in some 100 countries working to address the suffering caused by antipersonnel mines, through the full universalization and implementation of the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty.

Among the remarkable developments related to antipersonnel mines in the past year, States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty agreed on a ten-year aspirational deadline for completing their core obligations, and the United States announced it would abide by major obligations of the treaty except in South Korea. States Parties created committees based in Geneva that have a strong mandate to foster progress on clearance and on assistance to victims, to promote international cooperation, and to address any issues related to compliance with the treaty. This shows how vibrant the issue of antipersonnel mines still is, and demonstrates your strong collective resolve to rid the world of this unacceptable weapon.

The Mine Ban Treaty is among the most widely-accepted international treaties and has an excellent record of implementation. But it is not yet time to rest – some 60 states and areas still have landmine contamination, and in the vast majority of affected states, victims still do not see their basic needs met nor their rights respected. For more details please refer to our Landmine Monitor website.

During the past three weeks we were pleased to hear the many references to the Maputo Action Plan and to the political declaration adopted at the Third Review Conference held this summer in Mozambique. States will need to actively support those decisions in the coming years and should make the necessary adjustments to their policies, work plans, and economic priorities. Finishing the major work of the treaty within a decade is entirely feasible, and this deadline is in keeping with the mine ban community’s history of pursuing bold and innovative objectives.

The goal of seeing no new use of antipersonnel mines anywhere in the world within a decade will require progress on universalization of the treaty and on the acceptance of the norm banning landmine use. In general, respect for the ban remains very high among both States Parties and states not party, and the ICBL is confident that the goal of no new use within ten years can be met. Any use of antipersonnel mines by anyone, anywhere, should receive quick and firm condemnation by all states until the norm is fully universalized.

We thank all states that vote each year in favor of the resolution on the Mine Ban Treaty, in particular states not party that seize this great opportunity to express their support for the humanitarian aim of addressing the suffering caused by landmines. About half the states not party vote in favor of the resolution each year. This year, we ask the others to please start voting in favor of the resolution: please be in the room for the vote and make your voice heard – there is absolutely no excuse in the XXI Ind Centuty for clinging to a weapon where 75% of its victims are civilians.

Thank you.