

- Mr Secretary-General, Mr Craig, ladies and gentlemen,
- I am thrilled – perhaps even stirred, but not shaken – to share a stage with Daniel Craig, the Global Advocate for the Elimination of Mines and Explosive Hazards. A man with a mission. A mission to eradicate mines and unexploded ordnance from the face of the earth. A mission shared by the Kingdom of the Netherlands and UNMAS.
- On behalf of the Kingdom, I am glad to welcome you here, as you join us on this mission.
- Mines, cluster munition and similar forms of unexploded ordnance make living unsafe and livelihoods insecure: farmers cannot till their soil, builders cannot develop land, children cannot go to school, or even play, without risking life and limb. Laying mines is a grotesque form of hide-and-seek. The number of casualties is almost impossible to quantify. The economic, social and psychological damage is even more difficult to gauge.
- The mission pursued by UNMAS and Mr Craig deserves our full support. The Kingdom of the Netherlands runs a comprehensive *Humanitarian Mine Action and Cluster Munitions Programme*, focusing on issues like education, humanitarian demining, victim assistance, and the destruction of stockpiles. Demining in itself is not enough. It is crucial to implement demining programmes in a wider context of reconstruction and stability. I'm grateful we can work with dedicated and committed partners like Handicap International, Danish Church Aid, the Mines Advisory Group and the HALO Trust.
- Our national programme supports activities in eleven different countries in Asia and Africa. Efforts which have helped send out a message of hope. Two weeks ago Mozambique declared itself the first heavily mined country in the world to be cleared of all known minefields. So we may be able to strike one country from our list. But unfortunately a new country will take its place, this time in Europe, as we set about helping Ukraine in its demining activities
- It is with a touch of sorrow that I can say we are, and will remain, one of the largest donors in the field of mine action – the fifth biggest donor worldwide in the past five years to be precise. Just this week we have pledged an additional € 2 million Euros to demining efforts in Iraq.
- The Kingdom of the Netherlands will remain an active multilateral player, as witnessed by the commitment we made at the Maputo Review Conference to make the world mine free by 2025.

We also continue to our co-operation with Poland to ensure the General Assembly will again adopt a resolution that underlines the continued threat and the critical need for mine action.

- And we will remain committed if the Kingdom of the Netherlands is elected next year to a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for 2017-18. You can count on that.