

**The first international follow-up conference to the adoption of the
Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the
Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in
Populated Areas (EWIPA Declaration)**

**April 23, 2024
Oslo, Norway**

U.S. Statement for Session 3: Assisting conflict-affected communities

- The United States is grateful to Norway for including this important topic on the agenda and thankful to the panelists who have spoken to the challenges and opportunities in supporting conflict-affected communities. We all have a lot of work to do to see the fruits of our cooperation under the Declaration.
- Consistent with our commitments under the Declaration, particularly sections 4.5 and 4.6, the United States is working to assist conflict-affected communities, both during and after conflict.
- We are providing critical assistance to these communities in several ways, including through conventional weapons destruction programs and direct assistance to civilian victims of conflict.
- Since 1993, the United States has invested more than \$5 billion for the safe clearance of landmines and explosive weapons of war and lifesaving explosive ordnance risk education, as well as the securing and safe disposal of excess small arms and light weapons and munitions in over 125 countries and areas.
- In 2023, we supported conventional weapons destruction activities in 82 countries and areas with nearly \$400 million.
- On April 4, 2024, the U.S. Department of State published the 23rd Edition of To Walk the Earth in Safety, which is an illustrated report summarizing the accomplishments of the U.S. Conventional Weapons Destruction Program in fiscal year 2023.
- I would encourage all present here to review the report, which is available online.
- In addition, the Patrick J. Leahy War Victims Fund, managed by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), serves as an important source of U.S. assistance for civilian victims of conflict.
- Established in 1989, the Leahy War Victims Fund provides dedicated financial and technical support for civilian victims of conflict, particularly those who sustain mobility-related injuries from anti-personnel landmines, unexploded ordnance, and other injuries resulting from armed conflict, persons with disabilities and other persons that would benefit from access to physical rehabilitation services.

- To date, the Leahy War Victims Fund has provided \$350 million in assistance to more than 50 countries.
- Thank you for the opportunity to share our practices. We look forward to hearing the views of other delegations.
- Thank you.