

ICRC statement on clearance and risk reduction

Thank you Mr Coordinator, the ICRC would like to use its intervention in this session to offer a few remarks in response to the questions posed in the Lusaka Progress Report. Firstly, we would offer some thoughts on how to best support efforts to develop and implement cost-efficient survey and land-release plans. We would then offer a short remark on the efforts to provide greater clarity about the “end state” to help States Parties prioritise, coordinate and plan survey, clearance and land release operations.

Surveys and land release plans are important aspects of mine action and correspondingly they are a vital part of implementing the Convention’s Article 4 requirements. To ensure the proper implementation of Article 4, each State Party affected by cluster munition remnants needs to have in place a well-designed survey and land release plan.

In the view of the ICRC a well designed survey and release plan should include the following elements:

- The broad involvement of relevant and competent actors – both national and international – in the preparation of the plan, including a clear process of decision making and the setting of priorities;
- Adequate tools to collect and process all relevant data so as to facilitate decisions; and
- Clear structure and procedures to allow for the implementation and monitoring of survey and land release activities.

At the same time, it is important that the survey and land release plan fit in with the national mine action plan, have realistic objectives, a clear time frame and comply with the corresponding National and International Mine Action Standards.

In the view of the ICRC, States Parties to the Convention and other implementation actors can support efforts to develop and implement cost-efficient survey and land-release by:

- Providing technical expertise and information for the development and implementation of survey and land release plans. This can be done, for example, by providing information on the type of cluster munitions used in past conflicts, their expected pattern of submunition dispersal and any relevant survey techniques);
- Sharing the experiences and lessons learnt in other countries;
- Providing direct support through the provision of training and equipment for survey teams; and
- Financial support for implementation and monitoring of survey and/or land release plans.

Turning now to the value of clarifying the acceptable end state in survey, clearance and land release activities, the ICRC can only welcome the work in this area. It is clear to us that the clearance and destruction of cluster munitions remnants is one of the fundamental requirements of the Convention. In our view, clarifying the Convention’s terms in this area, while remaining consistent with the Convention’s goals, would be a benefit to the Convention’s implementation. In this regard, we welcome the papers prepared on this topic. Thank you.