

UK Statement on Cooperation and Assistance

4MSP Cluster Munitions Convention – Lusaka, Zambia 9-13 Sept 13

Delivered by Mia Gore, United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Mr President

1. The UK welcomes the updates provided from states working hard to clear their lands of cluster munitions, mines and other explosive remnants of war. The UK remains firmly committed to supporting this work.
2. International cooperation and assistance are core obligations of this Convention and contribute to essential humanitarian and developmental aims. The UK puts great onus on, and prioritises the provision of, international cooperation and assistance that saves lives and promotes development. The UK's assistance through the mine action programme forms an important element of our commitment to spend 0.7% of gross national income on Overseas Development Assistance (ODA).
3. Like many donors, the UK takes a comprehensive approach to mine action and does not differentiate between action on mines, explosive remnants of war and cluster munitions.
4. Over the last few years our approach to tackling landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) was set out in the UK's Mine Action Strategy from 2010-2013; "Creating a safer environment: clearing landmines and other explosive remnants of war". We have prioritised our funding where it will have the greatest positive impact on communities' livelihoods and where it complements other development programmes.
5. In implementing this strategy, the UK committed to spend over £40 million to support Mine Action from 2010-2013 in ten countries worldwide. The programme supports projects in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Lao PDR, Mozambique, Sri Lanka, Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia and Vietnam.

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6. In the last three years alone, UK support has:
 - a. Removed over 70,000 landmines and ERW;
 - b. Released over 10,000 hectares of contaminated or suspected; hazardous land so that people can return to their everyday lives; and
 - c. Increased the awareness of hundreds of thousands of people through mine risk education.

7. Over the last few months, the UK has been working with NGOs, UN agencies and mine-affected governments to develop a new UK mine action approach paper entitled: 'Clearing a path to development: The UK Government's approach to landmines and explosive remnants of war in developing countries'. This paper sets out the UK Government's priorities and principles in tackling the threat of landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) in developing countries and draws on our experience of funding work in the sector for over 20 years.

8. The objectives of our new approach are three-fold:
 - a. To support landmine and ERW clearance and risk reduction in some of the poorest countries;
 - b. To strengthen the ability of national authorities to manage their landmine and ERW programmes; and
 - c. To respond rapidly to emergency needs in humanitarian crises.

9. Our approach also draws on an evaluation of the 2010 - 2013 UK 'Mine Action Programme' ensuring that we can achieve maximum impact and value for money. We consulted widely with the mine action community and affected countries in developing this new strategy.

10. The UK remains fully committed to its duties of international cooperation and assistance and believes that through our new mine action strategy we will continue to be able to contribute to alleviating the appalling consequences of cluster munitions and landmines.

Thank you