

**Statement by Ms. Silvia Cattaneo, Policy Advisor
Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)**

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Mr President,

Since the adoption of the Lausanne Action Plan last year, good progress has already been made on the survey and clearance of cluster munitions in many affected states. We are deeply grateful to the many deminers and supporting staff who continue to clear cluster munitions and saving lives, despite significant challenges.

The utilization of modern IMAS-compliant land release methodologies, underpinned by strong national ownership and often generous support from international donors, has been the key driver enabling States to declare, with confidence, the progress made to clear their land.

In some States, however, progress has not kept pace with improvements in survey and clearance, including the adoption of new technologies that gather and manage data more effectively, such as improved detection systems that use tools like Unmanned Aerial Vehicles. We must all work harder to disseminate best practices to affected states.

As we move forward with Land Release globally and our efforts are increasingly focused on reaching the clearance objectives under Article 4, the job ahead becomes more challenging. Areas prioritized early on in mine action operations were generally more accessible, with more community and traffic around them, which made information more readily available. In order to maintain the pace of progress, we must turn greater attention to targeting land release efforts more effectively.

The operating context within which we work is also evolving, partly as an effect of the changing nature of conflict. The requirement to deploy field teams into often complex urban or peri-urban environments, in some cases in the immediate aftermath of conflict, is just one of the factors that is naturally impacting on the way that field operations are managed. In this context, let us remember that article 4 of the CCM includes the obligation to conduct risk education among civilians living in or around cluster munition contaminated areas yet to be cleared.

Mr President,

Perhaps the greatest advances in terms of “finishing the job” more quickly under Article 4 rest in the definition of better evidence-based criteria for Land Release in the framework of National Mine Action Standards. The IMAS provide the overarching framework for the quality of Land Release efforts. However, the specifics of All Reasonable Effort must be defined by each state based on an analysis of their particular context. Clarity on what All Reasonable Effort entails will allow National Mine Action Authorities to precisely monitor the quality of their operations, to confidently move forward with signing off on cleared land and ensure that communities trust in the safety of their land. A lack of clarity in this

regard means that the opposite scenario is likely: operations will be less efficient, will often lack standardization among operators, and quality cannot be ensured.

There is no 'one size fits all' for this process of analysis. This is best achieved through gathering evidence and creating an inclusive dialogue between National Authorities, operators and affected communities. The GICHD will continue to work with National Authorities to facilitate this process and support the dialogue that defines All Reasonable Effort through National Standards.

Thank you.