

Statement by Ambassador Stefano Toscano, GICHD Director

International Cooperation and Assistance

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Mr. President,

Despite a difficult year, progress towards the Convention's objectives continues and I would like to commend the States Parties and all other mine action stakeholders for their tremendous work in a challenging context. Particularly, while clearance operations might have had to be suspended temporarily here and there, most field operations either were continued or resumed speedily.

International cooperation is a central pillar of our Convention. It must be strengthened even more with a guiding principle and ultimate objective in mind: fostering national ownership. A notion that takes center stage in country coalition approaches.

In this context, it is worth highlighting the considerable efforts made by Lebanon, where a mine action forum was established as a result of a Country Coalition initiative in 2016, with the support of the CCM coordinators on clearance. The GICHD was asked to facilitate the first meeting of this forum and has been pleased to continue to offer its support as the initiative has continued to gain momentum. Lebanon has demonstrated that this multi-stakeholder platform can be used by an affected State to identify needs and gaps as well as concrete, coordinated actions that can be taken and the resources required. This has helped LMAC to garner additional international support, which has paid dividends as Lebanon has continued to make steady progress towards its convention obligations in the recent years.

The GICHD is a firm believer of this kind of approaches.

The pandemic has not stopped the work of the sector. We are hearing since yesterday updates from States Parties that testifies to the strength and agility of the Convention and all its stakeholders.

The GICHD, for its part, is accelerating efforts to deliver capacity development support remotely where required. Capacity development support is and will remain a key pillar of our role in the sector and work with national authorities.

For example, in Afghanistan, in line with the findings of our baseline needs assessment conducted in 2019, we provided on-line support on information management throughout the year. We also delivered a remote training on Risk Management, Residual Contamination and Liability. Still, not everything is fit for remote delivery. This is why, as we speak, a training course for Technical Survey is conducted face to face in Afghanistan.

Mr. President,

The draft Lausanne Action Plan includes a dedicated section on International Cooperation and Assistance. Section 8 and its related actions, #38 to #42, are aimed at strengthening this area of work. I would like to reaffirm that the GICHD is a strong supporter of the way in which States Parties, through the draft Lausanne Action Plan, are focusing on results. The incorporation of measurable actions and indicators in the LAP will be a key step towards ensuring that impact can be measured. Thus, the Convention and all its stakeholders will be well equipped to monitor and evaluate progress, identify successes and failures as well as draw the necessary consequences and adapt.

Thank you.