



Reaffirming the determination to put an end to the suffering caused
by cluster munitions

Second Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions

20-21 September 2021

Statement by the Mines Advisory Group (MAG)

Check against delivery

Thank you Mr Vice-President.

Let me start by congratulating the Presidency team on a job well done in the most difficult of circumstances. While the Review Conference has taken longer than we all expected, it is encouraging to see a strong renewed political commitment and a measurable and realistic action plan.

MAG welcomes the focus of the outcome documents on national ownership, evidence-based contamination baselines and measurable and costed strategies and work plans. We also want to highlight the commitment to sustainable capacity development, which is paramount. Residual risk is part and parcel of our work and all stakeholders in the sector need to work in partnership and step up efforts to ensure sustainable national capacity is in place.

This is not just a competition to destroy the last cluster munition, but a race to save lives. And that is what tailored risk education does. We are pleased to see a dedicated section on risk education in the Lausanne Action Plan, giving this life-saving activity the space it deserves.

We commend the Presidency's efforts to ensure the outcome documents address key aspects of the implementation of the Convention in a way that is mindful of gender, diversity and the environment and we support the recommendation to maximise impact by seeking synergies with other international instruments. We also welcome the Working Paper submitted by the Netherlands on synergies and gender and diversity.

Mr. Vice-President,

According to the Cluster Munitions Monitor, 2020 was the third consecutive year to see an increase in cluster munition casualties. All recorded casualties were civilians and almost half of them children. The continued use of cluster munitions by states outside the Convention is unacceptable. We urge all states not party to join the Convention and encourage signatories to ratify as soon as possible to address the grave humanitarian consequences of these indiscriminate weapons. While we must make every effort to prevent further casualties, we need to also remember that even when accidents eventually stop, assistance for survivors and their families must continue.

The Convention has achieved great success over the last ten years, but we are still far from our destination. Only two of the ten affected States Parties have "massive" or "heavy" contamination, as indicated by the Mine Action Review, yet none of them are on track to achieve their Article 4 obligations on time. We need improved national ownership, more country coalitions, and increased assistance to accelerate clearance.

The commitments being made here this week are a step in the right direction, but words without action will not make a difference. MAG stand ready to work in partnership with other stakeholders to make these promises a reality.

Thank you.

ENDS.