



MAG Statement on International Cooperation and Assistance

Check against delivery

Thank you, Mr. President.

Firstly, allow me to congratulate you and your team for the excellent work during your presidency and your efforts to promote the Convention. We also welcome the UK government's recent announcement that its Global Mine Action Programme will increase to 100 million pounds over a three-year period, including an expanded list of priority countries in response to recent conflicts.

We are outraged by new use of cluster munitions in Ukraine this year, which has tragically resulted in at least 689 casualties, as reported by the Cluster Munitions Monitor. This is unacceptable and we condemn any use of cluster munitions by any actor at any time. This is a stark reminder of the importance of the Convention and the need to redouble efforts towards universalisation.

We welcome support for mines and cluster munitions programmes in Ukraine and we hope that this support will continue in the long term. However, we urge states engaged in international cooperation and assistance to ensure support for new crises does not come at the expense of mine action programmes in other affected countries.

We would like to draw attention to the case of Lebanon, an emblematic State Party which played a crucial role in galvanising the negotiations for the Convention. Lebanon has taken great strides in its mine action programme and implemented measures that have substantially increased efficiency and effectiveness of clearance operations. With a good understanding of its contamination baseline and a solid mine action strategy, Lebanon's mine action programme also effectively mainstreams gender, and demonstrates a spirit of genuine partnership through a country coalition and ongoing close cooperation with implementers. Lebanon was on track to achieve Article 4 completion if 2019 funding levels had been maintained - a potential success story for the Convention. However, we are alarmed to see that Lebanon's projected funding for 2023 is 39% lower compared to 2019 due to cuts, including being dropped from the UK GMAP programme. Good performance should be rewarded. We urge donor states to urgently reconsider their support to Lebanon and other affected states that similarly demonstrate political commitment and national ownership.

Mr. President,

National ownership and capacity development are critical to a sustainable implementation of the Convention, and they should be at the heart of international cooperation and assistance efforts. We are pleased to see countries like Bosnia and Herzegovina request only a one-year extension of their Article 4 deadline, with a realistic prospect of achieving its obligations in this short timeframe. However, as more countries approach completion, we also need to examine what is required so states can continue to effectively respond to residual contamination and other explosive ordnance.

The example of Mauritania, which discovered new contamination after declaring completion, is a reminder of the need for sustainable approaches. MAG is pleased to have mobilised resources to start supporting capacity development in Mauritania and calls on other donors to support such efforts. Cooperation and partnership will be required to ensure long-term success of the Convention and MAG continues to stand ready to provide its expertise to support these efforts.

ENDS.