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Mr. President,

International cooperation and assistance are the bedrock of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

The Convention was developed through multilateral cooperation, and it is through cooperation that we will meet its goals.

It seems necessary to remind all here today that Assistance is a right and obligation. According to Article 6 *“each State Party has the right to seek and receive assistance”* and *“each State Party in a position to do so shall provide technical, material and financial assistance.”* Those are some particularly important words - technical, material, and financial – it shows that there are many ways to provide assistance.

Unfortunately, we are not seeing enough of any type of assistance being provided to affected states. The low levels of assistance are a major barrier to progress. Additionally, victim assistance remains severely under supported. We recognize that the global situation is difficult right now with new conflicts taking attention from legacy contamination and a number of states experiencing high levels of inflation or other economic crisis. Tough times are not a reason to pull back, we need to become more flexible, creative and coordinated.

Last year we shared three recommendations. The updates this week and especially the conversation today show that while there has been some improvement, those three points need to be shared again.

1. States requesting assistance must elaborate clear mine action plans, based on existing national capacity and inclusive of perspectives of affected communities and diverse groups. Next, they must provide regular and up to date information on progress and challenges. Article 7 transparency reports are an easy tool to do so, especially with the new format.
2. Donors and service providers must improve their reporting of assistance provided, disaggregated by sector, to have a clear understanding of resources available, existing gaps, and inform how these can be filled. They cannot let the good clearance and VA plans go unfunded.
3. All parties involved must strengthen systematic and regular interaction to guarantee assistance is efficient. Platforms such as this week’s meeting or country coalitions offer the most effective environment for such discussions.

Meeting obligations under Article 6 should be seen as an investment. It is an investment in the future of individuals, of communities and of the Convention. It pays off in increased economic growth, in saved lives and in progress towards shared objectives like the Sustainable Development Goals. States Parties have come together to build this convention and this community so we must continue to work together and invest in each other to finish the work started 15 years ago in Oslo.

You may have heard the saying “to go fast go alone but to go far go together.” While that is an excellent saying to motivate a sports team, for our work here, we must go together to go fast and go far.