



UK Mission
Geneva

**CONVENTION ON CLUSTER MUNITIONS
11TH MEETING OF STATES PARTIES**

AGENDA ITEM 10e: International Cooperation & Assistance

STATEMENT BY THE UNITED KINGDOM

Mr Daniel Lee

Geneva, 13 September 2023

Thank you, Mr President,

I would first like to thank Germany and Lebanon for their report, and I am pleased to be able to provide some detail on the UK's international cooperation and assistance activities, particularly our work on alternative finance.

The UK remains firmly committed to the humanitarian goals of the Convention and to supporting its implementation. These efforts are complemented by the funding we provide to global clearance projects through the Global Mine Action Programme (or GMAP). GMAP's third iteration, GMAP3, has been active since April 2022. Our confirmed budget for the financial year running from April 2023 to March 2024 is nearly £15m and we expect that the budget will rise in the following year.

However, funding shortfalls for clearance activities continue to provide a challenge to the potential for a world free of mines and cluster munitions. As part of efforts to address this challenge, we have been taking forward work to explore alternative, sustainable financing methods. Since last year's Meeting of State Parties, this work has progressed, building on research we commissioned from Social Finance and the HALO Trust.

Following the well-attended side event at last year's Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, the UK reviewed a feasibility study which set out how a demining impact bond could be administered in Cambodia. The study was submitted to the UK's programme managers by APOPO and Cordaid in October 2022. These organisations then funded the design phase of a first of its kind demining Impact Bond: "Minefields to Rice Fields". By utilising expertise from the demining, agricultural, financial and policy sectors, we were able to develop a project which offered robust, cost effective, outcomes driven methodologies, which will not only benefit local communities, but provide important lessons learned to inform our work on innovative financing in mine action going forward.

Investors were sought and the outcomes agreed, focussing on increasing local farmer income on demined land by introducing them to the organic rice market, and the UK was able to provide the outcomes funding required.

The UK signed the agreement to implement this project in April 2022, in the Preah Vihear region of Cambodia, and it will run until March 2025. An event to commemorate the beginning of the project was held and attended by the UK Ambassador in Cambodia, as well as senior representatives of the Cambodian Mine Action Authority. As this project is implemented and develops further, we plan to share insights and successes in spaces such as this throughout the year, and hope that it will be a foundation for future innovative finance work.

Already, there is increased discussion on the applications of innovative financing. At the recent APMBC intersessional meeting in June 2023, it was the subject of many discussions within a Ukraine context, and something that was raised at the Ukraine Road to Recovery conference in London the same month. The UK Government, along with our Dutch and Swiss counterparts, are in discussions with UNDP on funding a feasibility study which will focus on addressing the large-scale issue of contamination in Ukraine, following Russia's illegal and aggressive assault on their nation. We hope to report more on this as the project develops, including aiming to have something tangible to present at the upcoming Innovation Workshop, being held by the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, in November.

I thank you Mr. President.