



**Twelfth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions**

**NPA Statement on**

**Agenda item 10(c): Clearance and destruction of cluster munitions remnants and risk education**

**Delivered by**

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Thank you Madam President,

We would like to thank you, the ISU, as well as the Article 4 Coordinators Italy and Norway for your joint efforts to promote the fulfillment of the article obligations.

We congratulate Bosnia and Herzegovina on completing its clearance obligations. We are grateful we have been able to support this completion, and look forward to good continued cooperation. We would like to celebrate again the highest ever clearance record, as per the Mine Action Review report with 185km<sup>2</sup> cleared in 2023 and 96,553 unexploded submunitions destroyed. As one of the largest clearance operators with decades long experience in dealing with cluster munitions, NPA is dedicated to supporting affected states parties in their meaningful and sustainable fulfillment of Article 4 obligations. To date we have removed around 280,000 CMR and released more than 300 million m<sup>2</sup> of land. Just last year NPA removed and destroyed more than 17,000 CMR and released more than 32 million m<sup>2</sup> of previously contaminated land back to the affected communities for their safe and productive use.

The clearance efforts require sustained and long-term funding. The decrease in funding for Article 4 completion counters this positive progress and hinders the fulfilment of the treaty obligations. As we have stated before, humanitarian crisis must take priority, but not at the expense of other forgotten crisis. We ask donor states to coordinate efforts and allocate funding proportionately to all affected states parties.

Fulfillment of Article 4 obligations requires efforts beyond pure survey and clearance operations. To ensure sustainable fulfillment of Article 4, affected states parties must ensure strong national ownership and political will, and national strategies and plans. As per the Mine Action Review monitoring of the Lausanne Action Plan, 8 out of 10 states parties have achieved this in 2023, which is very positive. Capacity development of national authorities is key for sustainable fulfillment of Article 4 obligations and is also an integral part of NPA programming.

National authorities should also work to develop national standards compliant with the International Mine Action Standards as well as implement sector best-practice for cluster munitions operations by adopting the cluster munitions remnants survey (CMRS) methodology, to optimise operational efficiency.

The fulfillment of Article 4 obligations should also be effective and implemented in a meaningful manner, respecting the do no harm principle and without leaving anyone behind. Affected states parties should ensure that survey and clearance activities are needs based, transparent and take into account gender and diversity considerations. They should further ensure that survey and clearance operations consider climate and environmental concerns. The new IMAS 7.13 gives guidance on this and we encourage states parties to make use of it. Donor states should ensure



sufficient additional funding is available and corresponding requirements put in place aimed at taking gender and diversity aspects into account during mine action programming and operations, climate adaptation, environmentally responsible land-use, and sustainable livelihoods. As a member of the Gender and Diversity Working Group and the Co-Chair of the Environment in Mine Action Working Group, we encourage all states parties to make use of these groups' guidance and also remain at disposal in our own capacity.

Ensuring strong management of residual risk and a sustainable national capacity to address residual contamination is key to the full and sustainable implementation of the Convention. We underline our commitment to support national authorities in actively using and implementing the Lausanne Action Plan with an aim to strengthen national mine action strategies, work plans, standards, and information management systems to enable effective, efficient, and inclusive land release operations and timely and meaningful implementation of Article 4.

Finally, Country Coalitions directly contribute to the successful fulfillment of the Article 4 obligations, but this mechanism remains underutilised. As we have seen how it can be successful in the past, we strongly encourage affected States Parties and donor states to engage in dialogue with each other and form Country Coalitions with an aim to fulfill the Article 4 obligations as soon as possible.

Thank you.