

## Mine Action Review Statement

(delivered by NPA on behalf of Mine Action Review)

### Item 10(C): Clearance and destruction of cluster munition remnants and risk education Twelfth Meeting of States Parties to the CCM, 10–13 September 2024

I am delivering this statement on behalf of Mine Action Review.

Thank you, Madame President and thank you to Norway and Italy as coordinators on clearance and risk education, and to the ISU, for your collective efforts on Article 4 implementation.

**Global clearance of cluster munition-contaminated** area in 2023 totalled 185km<sup>2</sup>, an increase of more than 8% on the almost 171km<sup>2</sup> cleared in 2022 and a new annual record. A total of 96,553 unexploded submunitions were destroyed worldwide during clearance, survey, and explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) operations in 2023. Clearance in States Parties to the Convention accounted for 42% of area cleared and 76% of the submunitions destroyed, suggesting more evidence-based and targeted clearance in States Parties.

We congratulate **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, which declared fulfilment of its Article 4 obligations in 2023, while also welcoming onboard the most recent affected state to accede to the Convention, **South Sudan**. We hope to hear updates from South Sudan this week on its Article 4 implementation. In other positive developments, **Chile** commenced cluster munition clearance of its military training ranges in 2023, thirteen years after becoming a State Party. Chile could still just make its extended clearance deadline of 1 June 2026. However, we are concerned to hear today that uncertainty of national funding for clearance may negatively impact Chile's progress in Article 4 implementation and that it is exploring international funding options.

**Angola**—a signatory to the Convention—is no longer considered as CMR-affected by Mine Action Review as evidence reveals Angola has only a small residual threat from unexploded submunitions but no known or suspected cluster munition-contaminated area remaining. We have therefore removed Angola off our list of contaminated States, and we encourage Angola to consider declaring completion. We also urge Angola to ratify the Convention without further delay, having signed it over 15 years ago in 2008.

However, these positive developments shouldn't be used to mask underlying problems and slow progress in Article 4 implementation in a number of States Parties to the CCM, especially taking into account that only **Lao PDR** and **Iraq** have massive and heavy contamination respectively, and that the remaining 8 States Parties have only medium or light contamination. With the possible exception of Chile, and perhaps, although now extremely unlikely, Afghanistan, no other States Parties are on track to complete by the Third Review Conference in 2026. Of particular concern is the fact that **zero clearance took place in Chad, Mauritania, or Somalia** in 2023 – all three States are struggling to secure the international funding they need to implement Article 4.

Most worryingly, **Somalia** has made little to no progress to determine a baseline of CMR

contamination and address cluster munition-contaminated areas, since becoming a State Party to the convention in 2016. It had pledged in 2022 to develop a plan for a national survey for CMR during 2023, but unfortunately this did not materialise – we just heard from Somalia that this was due to lack of international support. We are pleased that Somalia has just announced that this survey has commenced with its implementing partners. This will help ensure Somalia stays in compliance with the clearance obligations under the CCM. We urge Somalia to focus on its commitments under the CCM, to submit its CCM Article 7 transparency report, and elaborate a work plan for determining the extent of contamination and addressing it. And we encourage implementing partners and donors to support Somalia in this endeavour.

Despite being one of the best performing Mine Action Centers according to Mine Action Review's assessment, **Lebanon** is no longer on track to meet its deadline. This largely because of insufficient international support to enable it to implement its work plan, although cluster munition clearance operations in the south have also been suspended since last year's 7 October attacks on Israel by Hamas.

It also now looks unlikely that **Afghanistan** is on track to meet its deadline, largely due to the significant reduction in international funding to mine action since the change of regime and because it is finding previously unrecorded cluster munition contamination in areas that were previously not accessible. Whatever one's view of the Taliban, they are the entity that has control over Afghan territory and the cluster munition-contaminated areas and who manage Afghanistan's mine action programme. Under international law it is the Government of Afghanistan that is legally responsible for the implementation of Article 4. We therefore welcome that the Directorate of Mine Action Coordination (DMAC) has committed to complying with the CCM's clearance obligations and that government of Afghanistan submitted its annual CCM Article 7 report this year and last year, providing updates on the extent of CMR contamination and plans to address it.

Lastly, we invite and hope delegates are able to join Mine Action Review's side event tomorrow at midday in this plenary room, chaired by Norwegian Ambassador, focusing on global survey and clearance, climate change and environment considerations, and a Q&A with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lao PDR and the National Regulatory Authority (NRA).

I thank you.