

**Mine Action Review statement on the Extension Request of Afghanistan  
(Agenda Item 3c, Clearance and Destruction of Cluster Munitions remnants)  
(delivered by NPA on behalf of Mine Action Review)**

**CCM Intersessional Meetings, 7–8 April 2025**

Thank you, Mr. President. I am making this statement on behalf of Mine Action Review.

As this is the first time Mine Action Review is taking the floor, I would like to extend our thanks to the Philippines Presidency, the coordinators on clearance, Italy and France, and ISU colleagues, on all dedicated efforts in support of Article 4 implementation.

It is important to note that as a matter of international law, Afghanistan is represented by the Taliban government and that the **issue of recognition of the Taliban Government by the United Nations (UN) and individual States Parties is an entirely separate matter from treaty application and implementation**, just as it is under international humanitarian law. The issue of recognition should not prevent the government of Afghanistan from fulfilling its legal obligations under the Convention, including adherence to the Article 4 extension request process.

We commend the **thorough and well-prepared extension request** submitted by Afghanistan, as well as the Article 4 Analysis Group's detailed analysis and feedback on the request, which led Afghanistan to further strengthen and refine its submission.

The two-year extension request comprehensively documents the mine action programme's progress to fulfil its Article 4 obligations to-date and clearly outlines the remaining areas contaminated by cluster munition remnants.

- Afghanistan has provided a **detailed work plan** as Annex E to its request, which plans to address the 16 hazardous areas, across 4 provinces, totalling nearly 9km<sup>2</sup> of cluster munition remnant contamination.
- We note the possibility of additional cluster munition-contaminated areas being identified during the completion of the ongoing village-by-village survey.
- While no cluster munition contaminated area has been reduced through **technical survey** up to this point, we welcome plans for its application for future operations. Directorate of Mine Action Coordination (DMAC) and the Mine Action Technical Call (MATC) intend to provide **land release** training for cluster munition operations, with the support of GICHD, as soon as funding is secured. This will help ensure that funding, if and when secured, is used as efficiently as possible.
- Afghanistan has provided a **clear budget**, requiring just over USD 2 million, and Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA) has taken the initiative to establish a resource mobilization team to explore different avenues of potential funding.
- The inclusion of **environmental and climate-related considerations** in the request is a positive step, and one which all States Parties should include as part of their Article 4 obligations.
- Reference to **gender and diversity** considerations in the request is encouraging. We look forward to Afghanistan maintaining gender and diversity as a goal in its upcoming national mine action strategic plan. Mine Action Review welcomes this, especially in light of the very oppressive policies of the Taliban government with regards to women's rights and gender

equality, and we will seek to monitor its implementation as an essential part of mine action programming.

The plans set out in Afghanistan's extension request are ambitious, but are achievable, if sufficient national and international funding can be secured. However, at present, **DMAC has no secured funding for cluster munition clearance**. This is of real concern, both in terms of preventing Afghanistan from being able to fulfil its Article 4 obligations, and also because the **impact of explosive ordnance contamination on civilians is significant**, and massive forced return of Afghan refugees from neighbouring countries has increased the urgency of clearance.

We also encourage potential donors to note that DMAC makes clear in its request the **different modalities through which donors can support MAPA**, including supporting national mine action organizations directly or through International Trust Fund (ITF), or through supporting international operators. It is also important that donors put funding of the essential planning and coordination functions performed by the UN Mine Action Technical Cell (MATC) on a stable and sustainable basis.

Finally, we encourage Afghanistan to continue to submit annual **Article 7 transparency** reports and hope that the mine ban community can find a way to enable DMAC to provide substantive updates to States Parties at future treaty meetings, including 13MSP, even if virtually.

Thank you.