



Convention on Cluster Munitions

7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties

4 September – 6 September 2017, Geneva

## Statement by MAG on Clearance

Thank you Mr President,

MAG aligns itself with the statement made by the CMC. We would like to add some of our own additional views.

There is a clear trend of improving operational efficiency in clearance, particularly in South East Asia. In most places, more cluster munition remnants than ever before are being found in the areas we – as a community – are surveying and clearing. This shows that we are working better and working smarter.

We have refined the way we carry out survey so that it is fit for cluster munition contamination, while also making better use of existing operational data to focus clearance. We are continuing to trial and develop new approaches and technologies, all with the aim of squeezing the most out of every dollar that is available.

There is also a trend of greater partnership working between NGOs. We are cooperating and collaborating much more in the design and implementation of our operations, and working in closer partnership and dialogue with national authorities. The results prove that we achieve more when we work with open dialogue. And when we constructively challenge ourselves and the way we do things.

That is why MAG strongly backs the Mine Action Review as a tool that helps frame dialogue that will enable us to improve even more. It is also why we support the country coalition concepts championed by several states and donors in this room.

All of these positive trends have improved value for money. Most importantly, more land is being returned to some of the world's poorest communities and more people can live without fear, something which is their fundamental right.

In summary, we have been doing everything we possibly can. While we should be collectively proud of these improvements, they will only get us so far. And that is not far enough.

Mr President,

We must be frank and honest as a community. We are not on track to complete clearance of cluster munitions and landmines in line with political commitments and convention deadlines.

We can only succeed if there is a fundamental shift in the scale of funding that is available for survey and clearance. Only then will we come close to meeting need and fulfilling commitments in the timeframes that have been agreed to. This needs to come from national budgets as well as international aid, and it needs to be sustained over multiple years.

Every day, MAG colleagues talk to communities who are using heavily contaminated land. They are usually doing it so that they can grow crops and food. They are very aware of the dangers involved and they speak openly about fear and concern, especially that harm will come to their children. They say that they have no choice but to take these risks.

Every day that we delay, generations who have not known conflict live in fear of being killed or maimed as they struggle to grow food or make ends meet. We condemn parents to worry about their children while they themselves take risks that most people cannot imagine. It is not fair that people have to make these choices – they are not choices anyone should have to make. So we need to do more, and do it faster.

2017 is the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Mine Ban Treaty, a process and treaty which changed the world's way of doing things and also paved the way for this Convention. The Mine Ban Treaty and the CCM put people first and these people are now at risk of being forgotten. They are already being forgotten.

Distinguished delegates, colleagues and friends. This year is a year to reenergise support to clearance – to recommit and to get back on track. When accident rates are going up for the first time in a decade, and clearance deadlines are not on track, it is time to change course. The price of failure is too high and time is running out.

Thank you.

**ENDS**