

Statement by MAG on Clearance of Cluster Munition Remnants

(Check Against Delivery)

Coordinators, Distinguished Colleagues,

I am speaking on behalf of MAG. MAG welcomes the practical and in-depth discussions concerning best practice and challenges covering clearance in the context of Article 4 of the Convention. We are grateful for the opportunity to comment on clearance from a humanitarian operational NGO perspective as part of this technical workshop.

As highlighted by the Coordinators, CCM Article 4 obliges States Parties to make “every effort to identify all cluster munition contaminated areas under its jurisdiction or control.” Achieving this efficiently and effectively is dependent on good quality survey that is used to determine, with confidence which land needs further action and which does not. By embracing improved survey methodologies with a foundation in evidence-based decision making, MAG and other operators are able to define contaminated areas with much greater accuracy, thereby allowing the most efficient deployment of clearance resources.

Where there is little or no documented evidence of contamination, our experience is that the size and location of contamination can be determined much more accurately if cluster munition affected communities are included in survey. Community Liaison has been a core component of MAG clearance operations covering mines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war. It remains a central component of MAG’s Non-Technical Survey process, as an operational tool that contributes to greater efficiency and effectiveness in operations.

In addition to enabling better survey quality, the involvement of communities is also vital to ensuring appropriate task prioritisation and integrated operational planning. Coordinating clearance operations with community priorities and development initiatives at the local, regional and national levels ensures that cluster munition clearance activities have the maximum impact on the route to completion. When done systematically, impact monitoring at the community level can establish baselines for measuring and monitoring the impact of clearance activities in terms of their contribution to post-conflict reconstruction and socio-economic development. It also enables good quality monitoring and evaluation. MAG intends to share further findings from our impact monitoring work at the Fourth Meeting of States Parties later this year.

A core element of support to affected States is the development of national capacity. Completion will only be achieved in a systematic and coordinated manner if the process towards Article 4 compliance is nationally owned. The continued development of National Mine Action Standards (NMAS) to incorporate new approaches and techniques is vital for this. This includes drawing on new detection technologies, innovations and the deployment of mechanical assets in integrated clearance activities wherever possible. As Mr Lardner has just pointed out, not every technology is appropriate to every context and it is vital for planning and operational processes to be tailored to the national context. It nevertheless remains important that national authorities continue to take full advantage of, and embrace new techniques and approaches, including approaches to Land Release.

Achieving completion in line with Article 4 will require continued and sustained donor support for organisations involved in clearance as well as for national authorities. Wherever possible, we encourage donor States to embrace multi-year approaches to funding as these allow for continuity in capacity and the most effective long-term planning. In MAG's experience, multi-year funding regimes have had some of the greatest impact and also enable measurement of the impact of operations within the project implementation period.

It is also essential that in advance of declaring completion in line with Article 4 States develop and maintain appropriate plans to respond to residual contamination from explosive remnants of war, including cluster munitions, which in many cases will be a possibility following declarations of compliance with Article 4. Ensuring that such capacity exists within a national authority will facilitate timely survey and clearance of any newly discovered contamination, including the reporting of such activities, in line with the Convention framework.

MAG remains committed to working closely with stakeholders, sharing findings and lessons learned, and assisting States and the Presidency in their efforts to achieve completion in line with Article 4.

Thank You.

ENDS