

Excellencies, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

As we discuss the *Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance* the goal should be clear in our minds. The commitments outlined in the Maputo Plan of Action develop a roadmap for meeting the obligations of the Convention, but each affected state will have different requirements and relevant challenges to address in achieving its obligations and advancing us towards the 2025 goal.

With this in mind, the GICHD would like to emphasise the importance of individualizing a comprehensive support package for affected states and basing this support on evidence-based technical analysis that will identify and address barriers to progress. Eliminating such barriers will ensure that Mine Action Strategic Plans and Operational Plans can be realised.

It is in this framework that we would like to highlight the results of the 4th annual Afghanistan Donor and Implementing Partners Coordination Workshop. The Workshop, facilitated by the GICHD on behalf of the Government of Afghanistan and the US Department of State, reviewed the substantial progress of the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA) during 2017 and reviewed the steps taken to address blockages identified since the previous workshop established operational objectives for the year. In particular, progress was made with respect to addressing the survey of anti-tank mine areas, and more efficient methodologies for clearance of these areas – especially with mechanical means. These two elements alone substantially increased the efficiency of the programme

New areas of work identified for 2018 during this year's workshop included: the challenge of addressing anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature that are causing an increasing number of accidents; the need to improve access for mine survivors to rehabilitation services and psycho-social assistance for reintegration, especially given rising victim rates; and enhanced coordination with other humanitarian and development actors to ensure that mine action is achieving greater impact in the Afghan context, despite a difficult security environment.

The meeting highlighted, once again, Afghanistan's commitment to meeting the 2025 deadline for clearance and to making its programme information, including detailed statistics available to a wide number of stakeholders. Mine action stakeholders have come together for the last 4 years to support the MAPA to share their perspectives on the programme analysis presented. This transparency has most definitely garnered the support of the international community and created a more team-oriented approach where the various partners –implementing organisations, donor countries, international organisations, including the UN and other partners – join the government in working towards common mine action objectives. This joint approach is irrespective of whether organisations are national or international, of whether funding is bilateral or multilateral. In this regard, the upturn in funding in 2017/18 was noted and

welcomed. And, this enhanced support from the donors, we feel, is not coincidental, but represents the confidence that such an open and transparent team approach has garnered.

Finally, this type of approach, which has also been used for Colombia, is a necessary means to overcoming blockages that no one group of stakeholders can address alone. As we move forward towards 2025, we would simply like to emphasise the success of this approach for states such as Afghanistan and Colombia and support the widening of its used for all states with a notable level of contamination.

Thank you