



**Article 5 extension request feedback – South Sudan
Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
2020 Intersessional Meeting**

2 July 2020

Statement by MAG
Check against delivery

Thank you, Chair.

I would like to take the opportunity to also extend MAG's thanks to the ISU, GICHD and others for the work that has gone into organising this intersessional meeting.

MAG will focus on the request presented just now by our colleagues from South Sudan. We welcome the consultative approach taken by NMAA during preparation of the request, and the support provided by UNMAS during this process. We encourage the Government of South Sudan to strive for completion by 2025, in line with commitments made on Oslo. Allowing for peace, access, and adequate funding, clearance of all known anti-personnel landmine contamination is possible within the timeline. MAG also notes that South Sudan has made strong progress in resurvey in recent years, through both cancellation and better definition of hazardous areas.

The request includes an assumption that few additional minefields will be found. However, MAG believes that operators will continue to identify unknown anti-personnel minefields. Low population density and displacement limit the ability of mine action operators to conduct thorough non-technical survey in many areas. Mine action activities are also impeded in more remote locations by conflict, environmental and infrastructure challenges. Nevertheless, the extension workplan is appropriate based on the evidence currently at hand.

We emphasise the continued pressure on agricultural and natural resources and the need for safe land for sustainable livelihoods for mine-affected communities and future returnees. Competition for resources remains a key conflict driver. Improved food security is also essential to reduce South Sudan's dependence on international aid in the long term. MAG's operational experience finds that land is most often used by communities to plan crops and undertake other activities immediately after it is safely released.

MAG agrees with the need for a pragmatic approach, but we emphasise that clearance should still be prioritised wherever possible. This is essential when also considering contamination outside the scope of the Convention. Areas affected by cluster munitions and other ERW can and do have greater impact on communities than some mined areas. Although prioritising higher impact ERW contamination could increase the timeframe for Article 5 completion, humanitarian imperatives should, in general, take precedence.

International cooperation and assistance continues to make a critical difference in the progress achieved to date. We encourage donors not currently supporting mine action in South Sudan to

consider re-engagement. A modest national commitment to the operational running costs of the national authority would also make a significant difference. We commend ongoing advocacy by NMAA within the Government of South Sudan and with international donors. MAG is also pleased to see actions around gender and employment included in the extension request, and as hopes to see further efforts to implement the gender mainstreaming aspects of the Oslo Action Plan.

MAG remains fully committed to support South Sudan's completion ambitions.

Thank you.