

ICBL Statement on International Cooperation and Assistance  
10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty  
Geneva, Switzerland, 30 November 2010



The ICBL is pleased to see focused discussions on international cooperation and assistance in the framework of the Mine Ban Treaty. We thank Norway for their contribution to the discussion. We will continue to try to move the general debate towards a specific discussion on not only the amount of global funding but HOW this funding is spent and HOW it contributes to the implementation of states' obligations under the Mine Ban Treaty.

With most clearance and victim assistance activities; as well as stockpile destruction in two states, still dependent on international assistance and cooperation, we believe that it is key to focus on how to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the whole program cycle, from allocation of funding until these funds are put to use on the ground.

There has been debate on increased efficiencies and effectiveness of the work under Article 5, which did in fact substantially improve implementation by highlighting the use of a variety of land release techniques. But there lacked the same intensive focus on the *processes* surrounding land release and clearance implementation, including funding cycles and mechanisms. The ICBL believes that reducing inefficiencies in these processes, as well as highlighting good practises and lessons learnt to date in this area, will further the aims of our convention.

In this view we are glad to support the new Standing Committee on cooperation and assistance as it will ensure this needed focus. We thank Zambia for their useful and welcome initiative.

However, we believe that to ensure an added value to this new Standing Committee, the discussions need to be substantial and framed around maximizing efficiencies and effectiveness, especially focusing on where in the current processes there is room for further gain and improvement.

Our observations through Landmine Monitor and the extension request process, as well as input from ICBL clearance operators on the ground, suggest that these gains could be identified by a more focused, regular exploration of the issues below:

**Coordination structures and implementation ratio.** While there is a need for coordination, QA and QC on the national level, the size, structure and placement of these coordinating mechanisms should reflect the actual needs on the ground. We would like for there to be a discussion on what the appropriate ratio should be between the funds spent on clearance versus funds spent on coordination structures.

More specifically, debate should be encouraged on what is the appropriate size and quality of coordinating mechanisms in any specific country.

In our opinion, coordination should be based on an objective needs assessment as is already applicable for clearance.

It is not a given that large coordinating structures should be established in all countries that have a landmine or cluster munition problem, rather the opposite. If the needs assessment shows that national authorities NEED international support and assistance in coordination, then an appropriate response should be devised. Otherwise the norm should be that national authorities can handle the problem themselves, possibly with the assistance of other governments, or operators, including able

and willing NGOs. Moreover, as the humanitarian problem diminishes due to clearance activities, so should the coordinating structures. There are examples of countries where coordination could and should be re-assessed, as well as many examples of good practises in specific countries.

**Another issue is funding through development budgets.**

We would like to see more discussion on what has been the experience of donors, such as Canada and the EU, that have implemented this approach, as well as the experience of affected countries working within those new parameters. We should hear from states that have chosen to maintain dedicated budgets as well.

**Another key question is about the use of multilateral funding mechanisms:** what have states' experiences been, and what are the lessons learnt from the perspectives of recipient countries and donors? A real discussion should be held on the merits and value added of Voluntary Trust Funds and other multilateral funding mechanisms, compared to time needed before the funds benefit the recipient country and the administrative costs when using these mechanisms. An evaluation of these mechanisms should be conducted.

**Finally, we would also like to raise the question on what amount of funding should go to more Research & Development in the mine action sector.** Mine action had a steep learning curve as a sector and R&D played a significant role in this process. However, a frank discussion should be held on what gains can still be added from more R&D in the mine action sector at this point. The ICBL believes that at a minimum ANY R&D from now on should be demand-driven and based on implementation needs in the field.

In addition to the points raised above, the **topic of competitive tendering should also be addressed.** We are NOT opposed to this in principle, as it can be a useful and transparent practice when executed well. However, when executed poorly, it can actually have a significant negative impact on overall efficiency, effectiveness and quality of work, and results in funds wasted.

There are several steps in the tendering process, which need to be well defined and executed correctly to prevent wasted resources: the statement of work, evaluation criteria, quality assurance and overall transparency and accountability of the process. Please note that for the benefit of time we will not go in these topics in detail, but they are elaborated on in the full statement, which will be available outside this room later.

The ICBL believes that it would be useful to have presentations on these topics at the next intersessionals to ensure focus and promote debate, as well as to agree on good practises. In addition to the discussions in various Mine Ban Treaty meetings, the ICBL has also been engaging in informal dialogue with various stakeholders on the above issues. We hope that we will be also able to report on these activities and any conclusions we have drawn from them at future Mine Ban Treaty meetings.

Thank you.