

**OTTAWA MEETING OF STATES PARTIES, 28 NOVEMBER – 1
DECEMBER 2016**

**UK OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND
STATEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND
ASSISTANCE**

Thank you Madam President,

The United Kingdom aligns itself with the statement of the European Union, and will make some additional remarks in its national capacity.

Long after a conflict finishes, anti-personnel mines and other Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) continue to devastate people's lives. Around the world today, millions of people live alongside land littered by anti-personnel mines and other ERW. This is a major threat to the immediate physical safety and longer-term development of communities: millions of people are prevented from using agricultural land or accessing essential services, such as health and education. Freedom of movement is curtailed; the safe and voluntary return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees prevented, and the delivery of humanitarian aid obstructed.

The UK is committed, through its various mine action programmes, to improving the quality of life for people affected by anti-personnel mines and other ERW. Our goal is to build peace and security, and support development in affected countries. We do this by tackling the humanitarian threat posed by ERW; delivering risk education; supporting the development of strong, accessible health systems; and building

national governments' capacity to manage their own ordnance clearance activities.

In 2015 alone, the UK's various mine action programmes in developing countries resulted in the removal of over 22,000 anti-personnel mines and ERW and released over 37 million square metres of land which resulted in people having better access to basic services and increased economic opportunities, as well as enjoying improved safety. The UK's projects reached over 115,000 additional people through mine risk education activities. The UK also worked in Mozambique, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Iraq and Ukraine to strengthen the ability of national authorities to manage their own landmine and ERW programmes, with national authorities setting strategic direction and creating capacity to manage risks.

The UK attaches a great deal of importance to gender-awareness in its mine action programmes. To ensure our programmes benefit women, girls, men and boys we collect disaggregated data and use this to develop our project design. The UK also has an increasing focus on supporting people with disabilities. This includes ensuring that development programmes adequately include disabled people throughout programme design, delivery and monitoring. We do not discriminate against, or among, persons with disabilities, whether they be victims of anti-personnel mines, armed conflict generally, or disabled through illness, accident or other causes. Support should be non-discriminatory and should aim to improve capacity in a sustainable manner.

Phase 2 of the UK's Global Mine Action Programme was launched in April this year and is implemented by The HALO Trust, MAG and Norwegian People's Aid, working together for the first time bringing advantages in economies of scale and enhancing greater value for money, as well as encouraging partnerships between organisations. The programme is valued at £10 million per year and delivers clearance, survey, risk education and capacity building programmes in Burma, Somalia, South Sudan and Zimbabwe, thereby contributing towards meeting the 2015 UK Aid Strategy commitment to spend 50% of Official Development Assistance on fragile and conflict affected countries.

The UK's mine action efforts have been an important component of its commitment to reach the target of spending 0.7% of gross national income on Official Development Assistance (ODA).

The UK has for many years funded such programmes worldwide, especially in those areas suffering from the effects of armed conflict, and is committed to continue to do so in future. This gets to the heart of what our Convention is all about – tackling the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines and other ERW, so that civilians can live their lives free of fear and risk.

In closing, I would like to assure you of the UK's continued support for achieving the Convention's goals.

Thank you, Madam President

