



Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

17<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties

16-30 November 2018, Geneva

## General Statement by MAG

### (Check Against Delivery)

Thank you Madam Vice-President,

We congratulate the *Landmine Monitor* and *Mine Action Review* on another two excellent publications at an important juncture for our sector. Both reports are testament to the critical role played by civil society in the full implementation of this Convention, including in helping to hold our community to mutual account. The reports also show how civil society's work in research, advocacy and campaigning goes hand-in-hand with our operational efforts in survey, clearance, stockpile reduction, risk education and the provision of assistance to survivors.

This year's report findings reveal some deeply concerning trends. Among them is the extensive use of anti-personnel landmines of improvised nature in several recent and ongoing conflicts. While this affects only a handful of states, its impact has been huge. There can be no doubt that it has led a new landmine emergency that falls within the scope and work of this Convention.

As a sector, we have demonstrated consistently our ability to respond to new challenges. Our humanitarian response to the new landmine emergency has been no exception; and our collective humanitarian work has saved thousands of lives in the Middle East and elsewhere. It continues to do so.

With this in mind, we welcome the accelerated progress made in updating the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) to respond to the increased use and impact of improvised munitions. We congratulate all those involved in the work done so far. As long-standing members of the IMAS Review Board, MAG has taken an active role in this process and we will continue to do so.

While our sector's humanitarian response to new crises is essential, we must also ensure that it does not come at the expense of work to complete so-called 'legacy' minefields. As HRH Prince Mired of Jordan put it very clearly this morning, many communities from conflicts long ago have had to learn to live alongside landmines, sometimes for decades. This is as unacceptable today as it was when this Convention was agreed.

Madam Vice-President,

2017 saw the highest year of international support to mine action on record. This is a huge achievement. But research and analysis by the *Landmine Monitor*, the *Mine Action Review* and the

Landmine Free 2025 Campaign shows how this achievement disguises a different reality for countries like Angola. The reality is that many countries are still woefully under-supported and are at risk of being left behind. As a result, communities are condemned to live in daily risk and in fear. This does not need to be the case and it must not happen.

With the right will and support, the Maputo Declaration's Landmine Free 2025 aspiration is achievable in all but a handful of places. We have the knowledge and skill to succeed. The sums needed are within reach of donors. The political will can be generated. But this can only happen only if the right choices are made.

We warned last year in Vienna that the clock was ticking loudly. Almost one year on, that clock is ticking even louder. Meanwhile, 60 million people continue to live with the daily threat of landmines and unexploded ordnance. We cannot let them be forgotten. Nor can we forget the enduring needs of survivors, which are life-long.

Next year's Review Conference is the last major milestone to bring about the changes needed. We cannot miss this opportunity. Instead – and as a community – we must work even harder and closer together to galvanise the necessary political will and achieve the changes needed. That means work here in Geneva. But it also means working closer together in capital cities and in communities. Work that must reenergise support from the public and decision makers while giving voice to those still affected by landmines.

So all of us need to do what is needed to change course and deliver on promises. And to do it before time runs out. When it comes to achieving a Landmine Free 2025, we should not just do what is possible. But what is necessary. And what is right.

I thank you.

**ENDS**