



Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention 19th Meeting of States Parties

November 2021

Statement on International Cooperation & Assistance

Check Against Delivery

Thank you Mr President

On behalf of The HALO Trust, I would like to thank the Presidency and the ISU for successfully taking this meeting online at such short notice. I will raise two areas: response to funding trends, and the environment.

As you all know, our sector has made significant progress since we last met, despite the continued impact of COVID. The Mine Action Review reports a 17% increase on clearance in 2020 on the previous year, with 173,000 anti-personnel mines destroyed, alongside tens of thousands of UXO.

But on funding, the Landmine Monitor reports that funding from international donors was in line with trends observed over the previous years, with the major donors and recipients remaining mostly the same.

Of course, HALO believes that extra funding for mine action is a sound investment for donors, even in the face of COVID's fiscal pressures. It enhances human rights, is integral to protection, promotes development, supports peacebuilding and – when done properly – can enable inclusion and the empowerment of women.

But the facts are staring us in the face. Funding levels are not changing and most national mine action programmes are under-funded and this poses a serious risk to Article five implementation plans. The global shortfall in funding for legacy contamination and response to recent conflict will exceed one billion dollars.

That is why the sector must get behind the commitments made in Norway at the last review conference, to “explore all possible alternative and/or innovative sources of funding.” A study funded by the UK has shown that various models of alternative finance can work in different contexts. For example with bonds, front loading mechanisms and public private partnerships.

It is encouraging that momentum and interest is building among numerous donor and affected states. They are right to explore it, as the Global Impact Investing Network estimates that the total impact investing

market exceeds \$715 billion dollars. That is over 1,400 times the size of the global mine action sector's turnover.

We invite you to a side event [tomorrow/this afternoon] with panelists from Cambodia, the UK and The Netherlands. An external speaker will show how other sectors have harnessed capital markets and impact investing to advance their sectors, and inform how we can apply these lessons to mine action. We hope you will join us.

Turning to the environment, COP26 in Glasgow is present in all of our minds. Despite disagreement, progress was made in a number of areas, not least in affirming the link between climate change and biodiversity. What is still less understood is a third global emergency: conflict, the primary source of our community's work.

We can no longer view conflict – its contemporary as well as historical impact – and the planetary emergency as separate threats with separate responses. 14 of the 25 countries most vulnerable to climate change are in conflict. And the 19 countries with the highest number of ecological threats are among the world's 40 least peaceful countries including Afghanistan, Chad, Iraq and Syria.

In the Horn of Africa, HALO is working with Candlelight, a local environmental NGO, to train local people on proven climate risk mitigation techniques on land HALO has cleared of landmines. This includes digging soil bunds to catch rainwater to allow for the re-greening of cleared land, and reseeded the safe land with native grasses to reduce soil degradation.

In Angola, in the headwaters of the Okavango, landmines make large areas a lethal habitat for both animals and people. Making the area safe from landmines not only protects the region's vital biodiversity, but will also help Angola to develop a conservation-based tourism economy that provides sustainable jobs. It is laudable that the government of Angola has invested \$60 million to clearance.

These are a strong start, but we must ensure that our work on mine action and conflict is linked to the global drive to cool the planet and prevent irreversible biodiversity loss. This is not just the right thing to do. It is essential to breaking the vicious cycles of fragility that will drive future conflict, poverty and contamination from mines and UXO.

We draw your attention to the work of the Mine Action Review and the side session on mine action and the environment, due to take place tomorrow. And we look forward to sharing a new HALO report on conflict, climate and conservation. Thank you.

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