



**Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
Nineteenth Meeting of the States Parties**

**Consideration of the general status and operation of the
Convention: Cooperation and Assistance
15-19 November 2021**

Statement by MAG

Thank you, Mr President, for giving me the floor.

Allow me to start by congratulating you and your team for the excellent work in organising the MSP.

In spite of accelerated clearance rates and the fast-approaching 2025 milestone, we are still far from achieving our ambitions. Of the 11 countries in which MAG conducted landmine clearance last year, only one – Zimbabwe - is close to being on track to complete by 2025, and even there this is threatened due to insufficient international assistance.

MAG also received formal requests for assistance from a further five states, some of which had previously declared completion before discovering previously unknown mined areas. Even where the remaining contamination is relatively limited in scope, national authorities' ability to respond is significantly hindered through a lack of resources, expertise and international support. We encourage the donor community to consider approaches that help address these post-completion challenges. This will continue to encourage transparent reporting under the APMBC framework. We also emphasise the need for such actions to focus on sustainability to avoid states facing these challenges again in the future. As well as technical training and capacity development, sustainability can be supported by regional approaches and peer-to-peer exchanges between affected states.

We are in dialogue with a number of states suffering casualties and fatalities as a result of new mine use, including in contexts previously unaffected by mines, with little capacity or infrastructure in place. We urge states in a position to do so to support community engagement, capacity development and advocacy activities that will enable these states to engage fully with the Treaty framework and meet their Article 5 obligations.

Considering insufficient cooperation and assistance is a key challenge to implementation of Article 5 obligations more generally, there is scope to better align work on Article 5 and cooperation and assistance. We support proposals for a review of the extension request process from this perspective, provided it is undertaken with the needs of affected states in mind rather than creating an additional burden.

Mr. President,

Funding is indeed an important issue, but it is not the only thing missing from the equation. Each mine-affected country faces specific and often complex challenges, be they technical, political or security related. What is required is a more holistic approach to assistance that entails working with all relevant stakeholders to find solutions.

The national platforms for dialogue that the Oslo Action Plan encourages are a good starting point. We have seen similar approaches in the form of some successful country coalitions and one of the factors contributing to their success was the focus on overcoming substantive and context-specific challenges.

Successful international cooperation and assistance relies on collective responsibility, shared goals, and unwavering commitment. That will mean investment, not only financially, but in terms of time, human resources and building political will.

I have already noted sustainability as a key challenge for our sector. This is something that we have talked about for a long time, but attempts to implement it have been piecemeal. As a sector, we must take joined-up approaches to capacity development that make room at the table for local and national organisations. MAG would like to thank the Presidency for organising the high-level panel on localisation and sustainable capacity development, which provided an important opportunity to reflect.

I also want to highlight the importance of comprehensive mine action responses. We need to remind ourselves that this is not a race to the last mine, but an effort to save lives and enable better futures for mine-affected communities. Alongside land release, we must not neglect the need for risk education, as well as victim assistance, which are essential to prevent and alleviate suffering.

Finally, bearing in mind that the journey is as important as the destination, we must strive to implement all activities in an inclusive and conflict-sensitive way, which is mindful of our impact on the environment.

Thank you.

ENDS