

Statement by Valon Kumnova, GICHD Chief of Mine Action Programmes

To be delivered under 'Thematic Session – Completion and Sustainable National Capacities'

APMBC Intersessional Meeting, 22 – 24 June 2021

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our sector has now supported national capacity development for well over 2 ½ decades and along the way we have learned many lessons. The right level of capacity strengthening to deliver each programme is a constant question for the mine action community to address. This question relates to national authorities and mine action organizations alike. What categorizes as success and sustainability is key.

The one point that is undeniable is that when we talk about developing sustainable national capacities, it is important to understand from the onset that this is a long-term commitment and endeavour.

In the recent National Directors Meeting, which many of us attended, I had the pleasure to share a panel with colleagues across our sector that discussed the issue of the national capacity development. Most panellists coalesced around the notion that the key elements for a sustainable national capacity are:

Institutions that should create an enabling environment for the development of capacities. Here, careful consideration needs to be given to mine action laws and legislations in country, the political will from affected state and donors, the upholding of norms and affected countries government commitment to national ownership.

The next important pillar is the **Processes** that lead to a successful capacity development programme.

Some of these processes include the development of national strategies where the affected country creates a coherent plan to deal with its problem longer term, and create an opportunity to link mine action with broader agendas.

The development and upholding of national standards to enable the safety, efficiency and effectiveness of the operations and development and use of information management systems (such as IMSMA) to capture and disseminate accurate information to enable evidence based decision making are important parts of the process.

And finally, the implementation of cross cutting issues such as Gender, Diversity and Inclusion.

The final pillar is the building of the **Capacities and Capabilities** themselves - which relate to both the people and tools.

In this endeavour the continuous training of personnel and engagement with the national capacities plays a key role. Listening to the national authorities needs and not imposing agendas when providing support is key.

With regards the tools, it is very important that appropriate tools are made available to enable capacities to function appropriately. This aspect is very important as far too often we see scenarios where there is insufficient support and investment in the tools which are a critical component to deliver a successful mine action programme.

Mr President,

One of the three core values of the GICHD is that we are committed to national ownership and sustainable development.

The GICHD has a track record in providing support to national authorities to build their national capacities. Through this support, the GICHD fosters national ownership and develops national capacity within a country to enable it to manage its own mine action programme and maintain and apply appropriate and consistent standards for the delivery of safe, effective, and efficient mine action. To achieve this, systematic capacity development is required over a period of time, not just relying on ad hoc training sessions or support to attend international meetings.

The broader issues of capacity development and the enabling environment beyond training have to be considered. These enabling environment are the framework that regulates mine action in a country, thus they are crucial to any sustainable national capacity development.

National ownership is also critical to the completion plans in all mine action programmes. Capacity not only needs to be supported in delivering current mine action activities to release land and meet international treaty obligations but also to have the capacity to plan and implement the move from the proactive land release phase to a reactive response. Reactive management of risks posed by residual EO needs a different approach and resources to the one taken during the proactive land release phase. This requires a review of the established institutional architecture within a country programme, as well as the continual development of relevant evidence-based systems, tools, and processes. . It is important to start thinking about these aspects early on in the life of the programme and not leave it too late.

As mine affected countries approach completion, appropriate national mine action strategies are central to facilitate effective and efficient operations. Inclusive and participatory strategic planning processes that develop longer term risk management strategies are a good example of how to strengthen collaboration and information sharing and promote mine action's integration into broader development and humanitarian agendas. The GICHD will continue to play an important role in facilitating these processes as an external and neutral partner.

In conclusion, Mr President, there is a need to recognize that building sustainable capacities is a complex undertaking; it takes place over a long period of time and requires different interventions at different times in response to changing needs, opportunities and challenges.

Thank you!