



Statement by Humanity & Inclusion (HI)

Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
Seventh International Pledging Conference
1st March 2022, Geneva

Distinguished delegates, Excellences, Colleagues,

As always, HI is grateful to be part of today's discussion. After two years of working remotely, we celebrate this opportunity to be (re-)connect with our institutional and operational partners and we remain thankful for one and others' important contribution to the anti-personnel mine ban convention.

In spite of difficult working conditions, pandemic and rapid changes in security contexts, 2021 has seen many milestones:

- The use of thermal imagery to detect landmines has been demonstrated from Chad to Iraq, and the successful methodology is being shared with all operators.
- IMAS13.10 on Victim Assistance in Mine Action was officially endorsed at the highest level of the UN last year. IMAS 13.10 reminds us that VA is an equal pillar of mine action, and that the mine action sector has a role to play in facilitating survivor and indirect victims' access to services. After all, mine-free is not victim-free.
- Increased focus on conflict transformation and launch of collaborations with peacebuilding actors in the effort to combined efforts that address instruments, short-term effects and long-term consequences of explosive ordnance with those that address underlying root causes that may have led to the use of armed violence in the first place.
- Stepped up collaboration between multi-mandated organisations with HMA capacities on allying best practices for operators that are not just numbers of items and square meter- oriented. Aim is to think more critically, and holistically, and to use internal expertise from our other departments (e.g. livelihoods, governance, health...), especially as we note that behaviour change has its limits when no alternative SOLUTIONS are provided in the absence of clearance.

However, even with considerable progress made towards a Landmine Free 2025, **we note that socio-political stressors such as climate change, forced migration, and consequent marginalisation or land and water disputes continue to fuel armed violence** – and therefore the use of explosive ordnance. In this ever-changing context, the work we take on to tackle the issue of armed violence is crucial in achieving broader goals of human security and peace.

As we salute the **community's ambition to work towards a more peaceful and stable world, we want to reiterate the utmost importance of developing adequate expertise and programming in doing so.** In fragile environments, there is no room for trial and error approaches or wishful thinking and it is our responsibility as humanitarian actors to ensure that our actions are not causing more harm than good in changing local conflict dynamics.

In this regards, we would like to share three observations:

First, even the most straightforward **mine action activities can have a negative ripple effect if local power dynamics or conflict sensitivity assessments** have not been conducted and conflict dynamics are not being monitored. As such, whilst land release might appear as fundamentally positive at first glance; if it benefits only one part of the society to the detriment of another group, it might actually contribute to furthering power misbalance and marginalisation, potentially fuelling conflict and recontamination down the line. In short, we need to safeguard against mine action being instrumentalized and inadvertently maintain or further entrench existing power imbalances in a given society.

In line with the above, we welcome innovative thinking and alternative solutions to financing the sector, such as impact bonds. We are cautious, however, that this may set a trend that will leave the sector to be overly reliant on the private sector. We also need to ensure lessons learned on risk dropping from other sectors to ensure best practices. Most importantly, we are concerned that this type of financing risks jeopardizing the 2030 Agenda vision of 'leaving no one behind' due to non-community-based priority setting, and the use of potentially simplistic metrics.

Second, as the community continues its expansion from 'instruments of violence' to 'root causes of violence', **we welcome the increasing interest in the Nexus approach.** In today's context, mine action does not solely belong to post-conflict settings anymore and we hope to see increasingly more collaboration with expert actors along the humanitarian, development and peacebuilding sectors to ensure that mine action remain a 'means to and end' rather than an 'end in itself'. HI has been working for 40 years on comprehensive responses to armed violence. We welcome donor's request for demonstrated outcome and impact monitoring with solid indicators to challenge us in our assumptions that mine action has long-term socio-economic or even stabilisation impact.

Third, the above observations on contexts, conflict and victim assistance point to **the dire need of maintaining a people-first focus.** It is our belief that no sustainable solutions can be attained without the needs and the voices of the people impacted as the driving force being any of our intervention. We therefore urge you all as a community to join us in renewing our commitment to the **Leaving No One Behind** principles and to use **conflict sensitivity** and **intersectionality** analyses to inform our programming and ensure that humanitarian mine action remains the vector for change ought to be.

Thank you for your commitment and continued support.

We thank you, Mr/Mme President.