



Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Intersessional Meeting

June 2022

Statement by The HALO Trust Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance & Innovative Finance

(Check Against Delivery)

Thank you Chair,

We have abridged our oral statement in the interests of time and submitted the full text to the ISU.

Now we are back in formal session, I would like to repeat HALO's congratulations to the United States on its new anti-personnel landmine policy. This is a tremendously positive development. Meanwhile we remain deeply grateful for the US's consistent support to the mine action community as well as HALO's strong partnership with the Department of State's Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement.

Distinguished Delegates,

We are grateful to all of our donors, including those in the room. But our comments on cooperation and assistance today will focus on innovative finance. Many of you will know that HALO has long championed the exploration and application of innovative finance to the mine action sector. It is a core component of our organisational strategy and we welcome the role the UK has played in driving forward innovative finance within the mine action community.

The need for new modes of financing is plain to see. Despite the generosity of many states and organisations, our sector remains woefully under-funded. Funding has been broadly static for a decade, which means it is declining against inflation. The shortfall is in the billions.

While funding has been static or declining against inflation, the last decade has seen a huge need for our sector's work in response to conflict in Iraq, Syria, Libya, Nagorno Karabakh, Afghanistan and, of course, now Ukraine. When new conflicts happen, we witness spikes in funding following such emergencies and new conflicts. But the spikes are short-lived and decline as quickly as they arrived. They rarely, if ever, meet mine action's long-term needs.

Second only to conflict, funding shortfalls represent is the single major obstacle to the aspiration of a landmine free 2025. The levels of funding and current way of working are simply not sustainable in the face of current and future need. It is clearly time for a new focus and to drive forward new approaches.

Innovative finance offers a significant opportunity to augment the resources available for our sector. This can and should build on – and complement – the conventional modes of funding that underpin the mine

action sector. And it is excellent that innovative finance is now gaining momentum, including with partnerships HALO is developing outside of the mine action sector.

Delegates,

The UK study has shown that there is potential for many and varied forms of finance, depending of course on context. But it is important to stress that innovative finance goes far beyond impact bonds, with significant opportunities offered by front-loading mechanisms and forms of blended finance that involve states, development finance and capital markets. These mechanisms could support entire states or areas to become mine free through novel structures that enhance national ownership.

HALO is working with experts in the financial sector to develop innovative finance models to support countries nearing completion struggling to secure sufficient funding. We are also exploring a model to provide long term, stable funding to current conflicts in anticipation of the inevitable funding drop after the first few years.

It is time to 'prove concept by doing'. Our ambition for innovative finance must be bigger and, based on HALO's work to date, we are convinced that innovative finance can and will go to scale. HALO looks forward to working with any delegation in the room who wishes to explore this further or learn more about HALO's work in this area.

In closing, I would also like to echo the words of the Distinguished Delegate of Australia during the recent CCM Intersessional Meetings. Developing innovative finance mechanisms is not just about leveraging more funding for the sector, vital though that is. It is also about driving greater integration of our work with wider economies and economic development that is both sustainable and equitable. It is about enabling and supporting greater national ownership.

And it is – most of all – about achieving greater impact for people affected by conflict.

I thank you.

ENDS