

ICBL Statement on International Cooperation and Assistance
21MSP Mine Ban Treaty
Geneva, 20-14 November 2023

Thank you Chair,

The ICBL thanks you for this opportunity to deliver a statement on International Cooperation and Assistance.

The provision on international cooperation and assistance under Article 6 of the Mine Ban Treaty recognizes the right of each State Party to seek and receive assistance from other States Parties to fulfill its treaty obligations. This has been crucial in supporting the implementation of the Treaty and the successes achieved to date.

According to data compiled by the Landmine Monitor, 2022 saw a significant increase in global support for mine action, up 52% from 2021. This is a welcome development after the downward trend of recent years and hopefully signals strengthened commitment by both donor States Parties and affected States Parties to ensuring the treaty's success.

However, in the current context of multiple conflicts around the world and growing humanitarian need, it is important that States Parties continue to work together to support the timely implementation of the treaty obligations. There is always more that can be done to enhance cooperation and assistance and to speed up progress towards our shared goal of a world free from antipersonnel mines. Today I highlight three areas where ICBL believes that more needs to be done:

Firstly, each and every State Party with Article 5 obligations has a right to international support. However, as in previous years, a large proportion of international donor funding in 2022 supported only a small group of affected countries. The top ten recipient countries of international support received 73% of the total. Within this top ten are States Parties with ongoing conflict or humanitarian crises, for example Ukraine, which received 20% of all international support, and States Parties with massive contamination of over 100km². States Parties with less contamination continue to struggle to attract donor funding. Of the 12 States Parties with less than 5km² of contamination, only five – Colombia, DRC, Palestine, Senegal, and Somalia – received funds for clearance in 2022. We must consider how funding can be better distributed to the high number of affected states with smaller contamination which could potentially complete clearance within a year or two with targeted funding.

Secondly, in our humanitarian mine action work we have a commitment to leave no-one behind. Yet despite the increase in funding in 2022, the proportion of support allocated to the assistance of victims of landmines remains disappointingly low, just 5% of all international contributions. Over half of this support went to just three countries – Afghanistan, Syria, and Yemen – meaning that many of the States Parties identified as having landmine victims received no dedicated victim assistance support. Surely it is time for a concerted effort among all States Parties to allocate more dedicated funds to programs supporting victims?

And finally, at the World Humanitarian Summit in Turkey in 2016, the need to strengthen local leadership and civil society was agreed upon by governments and humanitarian organizations. As part of this humanitarian family, the mine action sector also has a commitment to support the capacity building and funding of local agencies working in the sector. However, while funds allocated towards capacity building efforts increased in 2022, representing 9% of international funds, this was

not matched by the amount of global mine action spending flowing directly to local non-profit organizations working in clearance, risk education and victim assistance. Funds to these local partners accounted for less than 1% of all international mine action support in only a handful of States Parties. Recognizing and supporting the contribution that all partners, national and international, make to the effort to save lives and rid the world of landmines should be a priority, helping to ensure that the assistance gets everywhere it is needed and as efficiently as possible.

In closing, we encourage donor states to continue to work together, to collaborate and to coordinate, and to ensure that the much-needed international assistance is delivered on time and to all the places and people who need it. We remind all States Parties to act on actions 42 to 47 of the Oslo Action Plan to continue to enhance cooperation and to demonstrate the resolve and commitment needed to implement the treaty and to get the job done sooner rather than later.

Thank you