

Norwegian People's Aid Statement on

Item 10(b): Clearing mined areas and mine risk education and reduction: Conclusions and recommendations related to the mandate of the Committee on Article 5 Implementation

Twenty-first Meeting of States Parties to the APMBC, 20-24 Nov 2023, Geneva

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Thank you, President,

As this is the first time NPA is taking the floor, please allow me to extend our thanks to you, the Committee and the ISU on your work on Article 5 implementation and advancing the APMBC agenda

The implementation of Article 5 remains one of the core obligations under this convention to ensure the protection of civilians from the harm of landmines. As per the latest Mine Action Review Clearing the Mines Report, out of the 35 mine-affected States Parties, only two were firmly on track to meet their respective treaty deadlines: Oman (February 2025) and Sri Lanka (June 2028). Cambodia's chance of reaching their deadline in 2025 relies on the progress of Thailand and Cambodia reaching an agreement to clear the border minefields, and Zimbabwe, while doing everything right and being the only country scoring high on performance, is still in need of appropriate resources to complete.

13 States Parties to this convention are ranked with "light" contamination of less than 2km² or extent of contamination unclear according to the Mine Action Review. These are Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cyprus, DRC Congo, Ecuador, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Peru, Senegal and Serbia. While many of these countries have close to no accidents and can be seen as less pressing issue than the ongoing war causing massive contamination in countries like Ukraine and Yemen, it is important to remember that it is vital for this convention that we support all affected states parties in fulfilling their clearance obligations, as a means of keeping this convention relevant, effective and meaningful. The risk to the Convention if states do not fulfill their Article 5 obligations is that "almost complete" is good enough, which means that Article 5 obligations become nice to have, instead of legally binding as they are. States parties have the responsibility to protect the existing frameworks and ensure Article 5 obligations can be met as soon as possible.

Distinguished delegates, this is the last Meeting of States Parties before next year's review conference and a busy year lies ahead of all of us. We must therefore start the work now and begin by highlighting some key priorities we hope to see included in the development of a new action plan and political declaration, setting the direction of our work for the next five years. Fulfilment of the articles under the APMBC should only happen in a meaningful manner where we must ensure that gender and diversity factors are integrated into our work, and that environment is also clearly reflected and accounted for in all our efforts, as highlighted by the German Ambassador in the president's paper on green implementation presented yesterday. Mainstreaming gender and diversity in survey and clearance, operations and EORE ensures that we get the full picture and leave no one behind.

Climate change and environmental considerations should be integrated at any stage of operations, from planning and prioritization, through to post-clearance land use. It is key to employ efficient and effective land release methodologies that minimize the impact on the environment. While the Oslo Action Plan from 2019 does not reflect the environment and climate change, valuable lessons have been learned since then, including the update of the IMAS 7.13 on environmental management which is due to be published in the coming months and an increased focus on climate change and mitigation measures within the mine action sector, particularly pertaining to clearance operations, and NPA hopes to see this strongly reflected in next year's outcome documents.

The indicators in the Oslo Action Plan were a warmly welcomed contribution to effectiveness of clearance operations and making it easier to track the progress of implementation. We look forward to supporting as an operator and as part of the civil society the development of strong indicators for the Siem Reap Action Plan, specifically ensuring that clearance indicators are aimed at meaningful and timely fulfillment of article 5 obligations, building on the success brought with the Oslo Action Plan.

We also align ourselves with the statement made by Mine Action Review of which we are an Advisory Board member.

Thank you.