

## President's Paper for the Twenty-First Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

### *Green Implementation: Integrating Environmental Considerations into the Implementation of the Convention*

#### I. Introduction

1. Climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution are urgent global concerns. According to the World Meteorological Organization, September 2023 was the hottest September on record and 2023 as a whole is on track to become the warmest year on record.<sup>1</sup> Conflict-affected countries face heightened vulnerability to the adverse impacts of climate change. Of the 20 countries deemed most vulnerable to climate change, 11 have reported mined areas under their jurisdiction or control and several more have contamination from other types of explosive ordnance.<sup>2</sup>
2. In the coming decades, changes to the climate are predicted to increase in all regions of the world, bringing, for example, more intense rainfall and associated flooding, heatwaves, more intense droughts, and coastal flooding.<sup>3</sup> This will both increase the likelihood of climate-related hazards occurring in areas contaminated with anti-personnel mines and other explosive ordnance and may affect how States Parties prioritised and conducted implementation efforts.
3. Anti-personnel mines and other explosive ordnance continue to pose a serious threat to the lives and livelihoods of people in many countries preventing communities from accessing and managing essential resources such as food and water and putting additional pressure on scarce natural resources. Furthermore, the degradation of explosive ordnance may also cause the release of hazardous chemicals into soil or groundwater, unplanned detonations may trigger forest fires, and the presence of explosive ordnance hinder efforts to extinguish forest fires. In this regard, consideration and assessment of the environmental consequences throughout mine action operations can help mitigate negative impacts.
4. While the text of the Convention contains only two references to the environment – one on the reporting on environmental standards to be observed during the destruction of anti-personnel mines in accordance with Articles 4 and 5; and the other on the need for Article 5 deadline extension requests to include environmental implications - understandings of environmental impact and climate change have advanced considerably since the adoption of the Convention in 1997, including the need for action to mitigate our greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the changing global environment. In recent years, States and the humanitarian actors have considered how to better integrate environmental consideration into implementation efforts.
5. For this reason, Germany, as the President of the Twenty-First Meeting of States Parties (21MSP) to the Convention, ensured that the environment and climate change was included as one of the cross-cutting priorities of its Presidency. Likewise, a range of initiatives are underway that focus on the

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<sup>1</sup> World Meteorological Organization (WMO) website, "September smashes monthly temperature record by record margin", 17 October 2023, at: <https://tinyurl.com/34y464kp>.

<sup>2</sup> University of Notre Dame, ND-GAIN country index scores for 2021, at: <https://tinyurl.com/zea87zs6>.

<sup>3</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) press release, "Climate change widespread, rapid, and intensifying", 9 August 2021, at: <https://tinyurl.com/mr28d6b3>.

intersection between mine action and the environment. Notably, the International Mine Action Standard (IMAS) 07.13 on Environmental Management in Mine Action, first issued in 2017, is being updated by the IMAS Review Board with a view to aligning it with the latest understanding of good practice. The updated IMAS 07.13, which is expected to be concluded in the coming months, will include references to climate change and also include a Technical Note for Mine Action (TNMA) to support implementation. Likewise, civil society has further examined how to increase environmental consideration into their work including through the establishment of The Environmental Issues and Mine Action (EIMA), a working group open to all stakeholders involved in mine action, including mine action organisations, national mine action authorities, donors and commercial contractors.<sup>4</sup>

6. Environmental and climate change considerations are relevant to everyone, including national authorities, clearance operators, and donors. In the same way as gender and diversity are, justly, being mainstreamed throughout the Convention's implementation, we should consider how to best integrate and mainstream the environment and climate change. The Fifth Review Conference of the Convention in 2024 offers States Parties a valuable opportunity for incorporating environmental and climate change considerations into the next five-year Action Plan for the Convention. Lessons can be drawn from a number of different areas and frameworks. This includes considering the synergies with other legislation, international treaties, and declarations/resolutions, many of which have already been adopted by States Parties.
7. Since the adoption of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention in 1997, awareness and understanding of the intersection between the environment, climate change, and mine action have grown significantly. The elaboration of the next five-year Action Plan offers States Parties an opportunity to build on the progress made to date and reflect on the areas that still require improvement. The Oslo Action Plan introduced a set of measurable indicators alongside the action points so that progress could be measured. It also solidified the importance of integrating and mainstreaming gender considerations and taking the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities into account in mine action programming, helping make implementation of the Convention more inclusive. On the road to the Fifth Review Conference, an opportunity presents itself to keep up the momentum on matters related to the environment and climate change and help ensure implementation of the Convention is also responsible and sustainable.

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<sup>4</sup> EIMA website, "Resources on the environment and climate change", at: <https://bit.ly/3Ma4ke9>.