



**Statement delivered by The HALO Trust under agenda item 5. Matters related to the mandate of the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance**

Thank you Chair.

The sector is rightly mobilising to support the mine action response in Ukraine. The generosity of donors has been unprecedented and we commend the Government of Ukraine for their prioritisation of mine action, including at today's Recovery Conference in London. HALO deeply values its partnership with the Government of Ukraine as well as our friends and colleagues in the HALO Ukraine Programme.

As pledging commitments grow, it is essential that they are matched with support for systems that draw on the body of established sector practice. This will ensure the most effective use of funding. It will not only save lives and enable safe physical reconstruction, but also help to put agricultural land back into productive use. It is imperative that we avoid a scenario where disbursement of surge funding results in a need for re-survey and re-clearance in the future.

With estimates for survey and clearance now exceeding \$37bn, scale up also needs to be sustainable and able to withstand other new conflicts and priorities that will inevitably arise. It is worth recalling that at the height of the response to the Daesh crisis, Iraq and Syria saw a huge surge in funding. Nearly \$90m were pledged from two countries alone in a single year. Funding levels rapidly declined. Similar trends have characterised the sector.

Meanwhile, nearly all countries beyond Ukraine are experiencing significant funding deficits. Some of our members are facing the prospect of programme closure before the job is completed. Because we have prioritised well, it is inevitable that the last mile will often be the least visibly impactful. Yet countries and areas where contamination is not now at the forefront of many minds must remain important to our sector. Explosive hazards continue to affect communities and long-term recovery.

Delegates,

Next year will see the Fifth Review Conference of the APMBC. We must accept that our community has not succeeded in achieving the 2025 aspiration in most places. A large number of extension requests lie ahead in the next 18 months. Aside from new conflict, funding is without doubt the primary obstacle.

We must not however present this as failure and look to point fingers at affected states. There have been many successes, and, thanks to the Mine Action Review, it is unquestionable that there have been enormous improvements in mine action planning, coordination and the application of good standards in most places.

But it remains clear that funding is the largest obstacle to completion in most places. HALO looks forward to working with everyone in this community to develop an approach for next year's Review Conference that addresses the issue of forgotten conflict and post-conflict realities.

Colleagues,

I would like to close with a positive trend. A concerted effort by many states and civil society, including HALO, saw the 2019 Review Conference change the place and status within the mine action sector. This cooperation has seen progress in gender as one of the largest successes since Oslo. We commend in particular the work of our colleagues in the Gender and Diversity Working Group which, until recently, I was proud to Co-Chair on behalf of HALO.

As we saw from yesterday's excellent Thematic Panel, we now have the opportunity to do something similar with the environment. Several members of the Group are leading NGO work on mitigating mine action's impact on the environment, and enabling efforts to reduce the pace of climate change and biodiversity loss.

Our sector works in areas that are highly vulnerable to the impact of the environment crisis, but also vulnerable to fragility, food insecurity and conflict. So the mine action sector can play an important role in environment response, but also contribute in even more ways towards the prevention of future suffering. Which is, after all, why we are all here.

Thank you.