

November 2024

Joint Statement for delivery at the APMBC Fifth Review Conference, 25-29 Nov 2024, Siem Reap, Cambodia

Agenda item 8(e)(i): International Cooperation and Assistance

Thank you, Mr. President.

This joint statement is delivered by **FSD** on behalf of 10 members of the Environmental Issues and Mine Action Working Group

We commend the commitments made by States Parties to address environmental and climate change considerations throughout the Siem Reap Action Plan. These commitments must now be paired with adequate resourcing to ensure effective implementation.

While the responsibility for advancing environmental sustainability in the mine action sector lies with everyone—including national mine action authorities (NMAAs) and clearance operators—donors play a critical role in guiding and supporting the sector towards this goal.

To achieve meaningful progress, ring-fenced funding is often essential to support integrating environmental management, climate action, adaptation, and resilience into programmes, as outlined in IMAS 07.13, Section 9.3.

We are encouraged by donor governments already taking steps in this direction, including some setting environmental requirements for funding. For example, the UK's FCDO requires all bidders to demonstrate compliance with FCDO environmental standards, and explicitly scores potential bidders. Furthermore, we commend the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the FCDO for funding the development of the Green Field Tool, which will be made available to the sector in March 2025. Assessments and screenings are essential to identify and mitigate negative environmental impacts, where possible.

Several NMAAs and mine action organisations are already implementing measures to mitigate the environmental impact of their programmes. These interventions range from low-cost solutions—such as eco-driving training, reducing single-use plastics, and reusing materials—to larger-scale investments like solar-powered demining camps. While these larger investments may involve greater upfront costs, they can lead to long-term savings. However, widespread implementation requires increased investment to scale up these efforts.

Building knowledge and capacity within the sector is critical. Partnerships with environmental experts—spanning NGOs, academia, and environment ministries—can enhance capacity, provide tailored solutions, and ensure alignment with national environmental priorities and local community needs. Such collaborations can also integrate mine action with broader strategies, including disaster risk reduction, national adaptation plans, locally-led adaptation planning, biodiversity conservation, and pollution control.

However, building effective partnerships also requires time and expertise, highlighting the need to fund dedicated environmental focal points within NMAAs and mine action organisations. Germany and Norway are funding dedicated environmental positions. These roles are needed to address capacity gaps, coordinate initiatives, integrate climate resilience, and monitor progress. Environmental focal points also play a pivotal role in sharing successes, and encouraging the wider adoption of best practices. Donors who fund capacity development should also consider including environmental considerations in these projects.

Sharing good practices, lessons learned, environmental data, and challenges encountered fosters innovation, strengthens collaboration, and improves outcomes. In addition, robust monitoring and evaluation are needed to measure the impacts of environmental interventions. Evidence-based reporting ensures transparency and accountability, helping to avoid unsupported claims and strengthen credibility.

We look forward to continued momentum on integration of the environment and climate-change considerations, as States Parties implement the Siem Reap Action Plan. Doing so provides a valuable opportunity to deliver more environmentally sustainable mine action programmes and outcomes, and will support local communities in becoming more resilient to climate change.

We call for greater collaboration, local partnerships and resourcing to fulfil these commitments.

Thank you.