

ICBL Statement on International Cooperation and Assistance

Mine Ban Treaty's 5th Review Conference, Siem Reap, Cambodia, 25-29 November 2024

Thank you, Mr. President,

Article 6 of the Mine Ban Treaty requires all states “in a position to do so” to provide support to other States Parties for victim assistance, clearance, and stockpile destruction. Landmine Monitor 2024 data shows that in the five years since the Oslo Action Plan was adopted by States Parties, States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty have fulfilled this obligation with \$1.1 billion in contributions to other States Parties. This demonstrates clearly how crucial the convention remains in ensuring support to States Parties for the implementation efforts and the successes achieved to date.

In 2023, we saw global support for mine action surpass one billion US dollars for the first time. This includes funding contributed by affected states to their own national mine action programs. However, the national contributions by affected States Parties continue to be under-reported. We urge all affected States Parties to report annually on their national financial contributions to mine action, including alternative and innovative sources of funding, as outlined in Action 40 of the draft Siem Reap-Angkor Action Plan. Reporting on national contributions will not only provide a clearer picture of global mine action support, but will demonstrate strong national ownership and commitment to meeting Treaty obligations.

Looking at international support on its own, in 2023, it amounted to \$798.3 million, a similar level to the support provided in 2022. Ukraine headed the list of recipient countries for the second year in a row, receiving 39% of all international donor funds. While this funding demonstrates that States Parties can respond swiftly to crises and conflict, ensuring that funds are directed to States Parties where the need is most urgently needed, we must not forget that we have a responsibility to support ALL States Parties. We have seen some worrying developments in this regard:

- First, eight countries within the list of top ten recipients, six of which are States Parties, saw a decrease in international funding in 2023. States Parties Afghanistan and Yemen both saw hefty decreases in international funding, despite having significant contamination and severely underfunded healthcare and rehabilitation services.
- Secondly, as in previous years, several States Parties with small amounts of contamination struggled to gain international funding to meet their Article 5 obligations. Only 6 of the 12 States Parties with under 5km² of contamination received funds for clearance in 2023.

States Parties must consider how funding can be better coordinated and distributed to meet the expressed needs of all affected States Parties and particularly those that have consistently struggled to access international support. Many of these countries have small amounts of contamination and could potentially complete clearance within a year or two with targeted funding. In this regard, we welcome the inclusion within the draft Siem Reap-Angkor Action Plan of a suggestion to establish a voluntary trust fund for this purpose. We encourage States Parties to consider strengthening this proposal so that a solution is put in place more quickly than the currently foreseen. There is no need to take two more years to reflect on a decision, knowing that the implementation of a decision would likely take even more time.

We also have an obligation to ensure that no populations are left behind under Article 6. Yet despite an increase in funding in 2023, the proportion of support allocated to the assistance of victims of landmines remains disappointingly low, at just 6% of all international contributions. As in previous years, many States Parties with significant numbers of mine victims received little or no victim assistance support, despite needs remaining great. Support to victim assistance must be increased to meet the needs, either through earmarked funds in mine action budgets, or by ensuring that broader humanitarian and development funding is targeted to the needs and interests of victims. We recommend such a commitment be included in the Action Plan.

Finally, we welcome the inclusion within the best practices on implementation outlined in the draft Siem Reap Angkor Action Plan to build sustainable national capacities and to strengthen efforts to localize mine action. As in 2022, funding directed towards capacity building increased in 2023, representing 12% of all international funds, but the international support to local non-profit organizations working in clearance, risk education, and victim assistance remained disappointingly low, at less than 1% of total funds. There is much more to be done to strengthen and support local leadership and initiatives.

As we finalize the Siem Reap-Angkor Action Plan, we remind all States Parties to continue to work together to provide the support and assistance required for the implementation of all treaty obligations in an equitable manner. States Parties need to ensure a better distribution of resources so that ALL affected States Parties receive the support they need, ALL sectors are financed, and ALL partners, both national and international, are recognized and supported. We need to ensure that our good intentions documented here in Siem Reap do not stay as words on a page, but are transformed into concrete, targeted, and funded actions that move us closer to our goal of a world free from mines.

Thank you.