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“Matters related to the mandate of the Committee on Article 5 Implementation – Survey and clearance”

APMBC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 17-20 June 2025

Madam President,

We would like to focus on two issues relevant to this agenda item that the GICHD is currently finalizing work on: prioritization and liability.

Planning in land release has traditionally, and understandably, prioritized areas with high accident rates or extensive contamination, especially if located in or near populated zones. Increasingly, however, the mine action sector is aligning clearance efforts with broader global objectives to reinforce the long-term impact of our work. The Siem Reap–Angkor Action Plan reflects this evolution, committing States Parties to ensure that survey and clearance are prioritized based on nationally driven humanitarian and sustainable development criteria, as well as environmental concerns.

In this context, we are pleased to share the GICHD’s upcoming publication on *Climate Resilience Priority-Setting Methodology in Mine Action*, which aims to support national authorities in integrating climate resilience into priority-setting and tasking systems.

The effects of climate change such as floods, droughts, and extreme temperatures are already compounding the challenges faced by communities living with explosive ordnance contamination, further undermining livelihoods, degrading ecosystems, and limiting sustainable recovery. On the other hand, growing evidence shows that effective land release contributes to the climate resilience of affected communities, in addition to people’s safety. By embedding climate considerations into mine action planning, therefore, we can ensure that clearance efforts deliver maximum, long-lasting benefits.

This new methodology includes two practical tools: the first helps national authorities assess how well climate resilience is currently integrated into national priority-setting; the second offers a comprehensive set of adaptable criteria and indicators to guide future prioritization.

The methodology builds on lessons learned during field testing in Iraq and Vietnam and follows the guidance of IMAS 07.13 on environmental management and climate change.

Madam President,

While often overlooked, liability in mine action is another critical aspect of land release and residual risk management. In the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), liability generally refers to the legal responsibility, duty or obligation that a country, organisation, or individual may have. In practice, liability for an adverse event, such as an accident or the discovery of a missed item in a released area, is generally linked to non-compliance with agreed policies or procedures.

The actual or perceived risk of financial or legal consequences following an incident can potentially be an obstacle to the final handover of released land or its acceptance by beneficiaries. This hesitance may slow down completion and leave affected communities in uncertainty.

Clear allocation of legal responsibilities among national mine action authorities, demining organisations, governments, donors and local communities is essential to ensure accountability and protect civilians.

To support national authorities and partners in navigating this complex issue, the GICHD is finalising an issue brief that distils key responsibilities into clear, actionable steps that could reduce the possibility of future liability claims. The brief includes practical checklists designed to help national mine action authorities, demining organisations and other stakeholders to integrate liability considerations across operations, from cancellation and reduction to clearance and the management of residual risk.

We look forward to sharing this work more widely and to contributing to the ongoing conversation on how mine action can support both humanitarian protection and sustainable development.

Thank you.