

GICHD Statement on Clearance and destruction of cluster munition remnants and risk education

2RC CCM, Switzerland, 25-27 November 2020

Mr. President,

As we enter the tenth year since the convention entered into force, we can clearly see that significant achievements have been made in terms of the survey and clearance of cluster munitions across many affected states. This tangible progress, which has been made possible through the continued deployment of operational teams, should be celebrated and commended.

As we build on our accomplishments and direct our focus towards nationally driven completion initiatives we must draw on the lessons that we have learned; we must strive to ensure that the indispensable national capacities that have been developed are strengthened to ensure their sustainability.

In particular, the application of the latest standards, methods and tools must be a nationally driven endeavour. Indeed, some of the greatest advances in terms of Article 4 of the convention have been enabled by a more systematic use of clear evidence-based criteria, in line with IMAS, and ideally captured in National Mine Action Standards - adapted and tailored to country's specific needs.

It is also true that as we move forward with Land Release globally, the job ahead is becoming ever more challenging. Contaminated areas prioritized early on were generally more accessible, with more community and traffic around them. In such situations more precise information is generally available, and this can be used by field operators to identify the extent of contamination through survey, before clearance assets were deployed. In order to maintain the pace of progress where evidence may be less readily available, we must turn greater attention at both targeting LR assets more effectively, but also by finding the most effective means of supporting affected states in their endeavours to address areas that are contaminated but that are more difficult to access.

Mr. President,

The GICHD supports efforts to strengthen risk education and recognises these as a means of protecting civilians from the risks of cluster munitions. In this respect, the Centre commends States Parties and the Presidency for creating a dedicated section on risk education in the draft Lausanne Action Plan.

The GICHD also aligns itself with the statement of the Gender Working Group (delivered by HI) and stands ready to support States Parties to mainstream gender and diversity in all areas of mine action to ensure better results. Gender equality and inclusion are a goal in themselves, but the GICHD believes that

they are also essential to increase the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of mine action interventions.

Rest assured that the GICHD will continue its work with National Mine Action Authorities to develop appropriate national capacities and support the elaboration of National Standards that serve as the guiding framework for continued success on Land Release, Risk Education and Gender and Diversity mainstreaming.

Thank you!