

ICBL Statement on International Cooperation and Assistance
Third Review Conference of the Mine Ban Treaty
24 June 2014



Mr. President,

Over the past two decades, international support for mine action has increased to some US\$500 million annually, meaning that several billion dollars have been dedicated to mine action since the treaty came into force. According to the Landmine Monitor, early indicators suggest a decline in international support, from \$497 million in 2012 to almost US\$435 million in 2013. But rather than focusing on levels of funding, we would like to have a discussion about value for money that could lead to real improvement across the sector.

Donors are rightly looking for very high value for money, and for clear reporting on what is happening with their investments in protecting communities and fulfilling international obligations. The mine action sector must work together to improve our individual and collective efficiency and effectiveness. This means all organizations and stakeholders improving their value for money, accountability and transparency, and being open to making tough and difficult decisions. If we don't do this, we will fail.

Fifteen years after the treaty entered into force, each mine-affected state should have a clear picture of remaining mine contamination, but many do not. And many more should have already completed their survey and clearance. Many states have made great progress. But in many others, commitment by national governments is inadequate to meet its Article 5 requirements.

In some cases, this lack of national political support has led to donors or operators stopping funding programs out of frustration. The result of this sort of breakdown is not just a failure of treaty commitments. The results are felt by individuals and communities living with mine contamination – the people we came together in the first place to protect. Failing mine affecting communities and mine survivors is just not acceptable. Funding demining in states that are unable or unwilling to target clearance to known contamination is also an unacceptable waste of time and money, not to mention a terrible failure to protect communities still at risk. Things are changing but they need to change faster.

Vast sums of money have been committed to developing managerial and coordination capacity in affected countries. Sometimes this has worked well – Afghanistan is one clear example. But there are many cases where funding and support has had poor results and others where there has simply not been acceptable progress in the identification and clearance of mined areas. It is time to reform – and in some cases phase out - expensive capacity assistance projects when they are proving inefficient or ineffective. We need to find better ways to create sustainable national capacity in states with a long-term need for survey and clearance. This involves making difficult decisions, but they are responsible ones and they need to happen. We can't go on wasting money while landmines affect communities in over 50 countries every single day.

Turning to the UN, we have welcomed the IACG's efforts to create a monitoring and evaluation system to better assess their progress against their mine action strategy. But establishing an M&E framework is not enough. Findings need to be used to prove and improve progress and progress needs to be shared with the international community. ICBL is still concerned with the levels of accountability and transparency associated with the significant funding going to UN mine action operations and VTF, and we hope the M&E framework will improve it. ICBL repeats its calls to the IACG to prove and improve accountability in UN and VTF expenditure, demonstrating added value, value for money and results.

We call on donors to take a similar approach with all partners and stakeholders. With national authorities, with national and international organizations - NGO or commercial - as well as the UN. Are they getting value for their money? Are they getting a clear, meaningful report on results for mine clearance? Is a sustainable capacity being built in those states with long-term programs? The answers to these questions should not just be yes or no. They should promote discussion, improvement, decisions and change. They should help us all promote the best possible use of mine clearance resources. There is absolutely no reason to delay or be defensive. It is time to make cooperation and assistance as strong as we can. Such proactive engagement is the idea behind our call for genuine completion partnerships.

Evaluation and the use of evaluation data to inform decision making can play a significant role in improving efficiency, effectiveness and impact in mine action programming. The mine action should follow the example set in the broader development community, drawing on existing good practice and the IMAS.

Mr. President, on support for victim assistance, we would like to repeat our call to donors supporting victim assistance through broader disability and development frameworks to demonstrate how such mainstreamed contributions reach the most vulnerable victims, including rural and remote areas. We ask donors to require solid reporting from beneficiaries on whether the support has a sustained impact on victims, regardless of the modalities through which services are provided

On stockpile destruction, where international support is a critical factor for both Belarus and Ukraine to finish destruction, we also see a need for donors to stay more involved in monitoring progress. For example, EU member states have authorized funding for Ukraine's destruction, funding which has been bogged down in internal EU and Ukrainian bureaucracies since 2010. Here too, states should voice their desire to see their money used for its intended purpose without any further delay.

Mr. President, we as a community decided long ago that ridding the world of landmines and addressing their legacy would be a joint effort. We ask states to recommit to this goal but to turn that commitment into action as well as words. Let's work more closely together to ensure the

best possible use of international cooperation and assistance. Let's let ourselves get better. We have no time – or resources - to waste, and failing is not an option.