Fifth Review Conference

of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

25-29 November 2024, Siem Reap-Angkor, Cambodia

saves lives builds futures

Agenda Item 10(c)

Clearing mined areas

Statement by MAG

Check against delivery.

Thank you Mr President,

Congratulations on your leadership of this historic Fifth Review Conference, and on Cambodia's leadership since the earliest days of the movement to ban landmines. We thank you for your energetic inclusion of civil society throughout the Review Conference process, and for Cambodia's long term operational and strategic partnership with MAG for more than 30 years. As always, we aim to contribute both our technical and political expertise, drawing on the work of MAG staff around the world and the needs and views expressed by all the people with whom we work, including national authorities and mine-affected communities.

Delegates this week have a great responsibility in agreeing an Action Plan and Political Declaration that address the scourge of anti-personnel mines and their effects and are responsive to the diversity of contexts in which the Convention is now implemented.

We welcome the October draft of the Siem Reap-Angkor Action Plan, a document clearly rooted in today's reality of APMBC implementation. We urge all States Parties to sustain this direction towards a document that will guide our efforts to new challenges, prevent harm and protect human life and guaranteeing human dignity. We should never forget that technical implementation of the legal provisions we discuss in this room, on the ground could make the difference between death and life for a human being.

We welcome the emphasis in Section V on the importance of reliable and up-to-date contamination baselines and to report context-specific circumstances in extension requests and reports. We are particularly glad to see acknowledgement of the different challenges facing states implementing the Treaty in the midst of armed conflict, and recognition of the value of explosive ordnance risk education and reduction activities in such circumstances. We work closely with a number of states facing these complex challenges and welcome the dialogue we have with these states as they wrestle with competing priorities. We encourage all States Parties to recognise the diverse circumstances faced by States Parties in implementing Article 5. We encourage donors to consider supporting development of national capacities, data collection, and other activities for affected states at an early stage of implementation. Without investment in these building blocks, full survey and clearance will be delayed when the situation becomes permissible.

This draft action plan also well reflects the value of mine risk education and reduction. We agree and reiterate that risk education interventions are sometimes the only means of reducing harm from explosive ordnance during conflict and should therefore be seen as an imperative in emergency situations. We welcome the goal in Section VI to integrate risk education in larger humanitarian and development plans and interventions. In fact risk education and community liaison activities support the most vulnerable groups, especially displaced people and those crossing borders in search of livelihoods opportunities. In this regards, it is also essential that this action plan maintain the wording and concepts that allow the APMBC community to effectively address and prevent the

challenges caused by conflict, massive migration flows and displacement, food insecurity, and climate change, breaking silos for effective action.

Landmines of an improvised nature and victim activated explosive devices are rightly mainstreamed throughout the text of the action plan. Although preventing and addressing the contamination of these types of devices require adaptation, the principles set by the Convention should always those that guide it.

The prominence given to national ownership and the development of sustainable national capacity in the Siem Reap-Angkor Action Plan is remarkable. We are glad to see a dedicated action on this topic and its mainstreaming throughout the whole action plan. The specific action, in particular, serves to highlight the critical nature of sustainable national capacity throughout the whole pathway to completion and beyond it, when it comes to managing residual risk.

We are pleased to see inclusion of the discovery of previously unknown mined areas as a specific action, and the direct link to sustainable national capcacities. We also note that many states who have fulfilled their Article 5 so far during the life of the Convention have done so through strong national ownership and commitment of resources. Recognising the competing priorities faced by many affected states, we applaud those who invest in their national mine action programmes and encourage donors to respond to these commitments with their own to accelerate progress.

Mr. President,

MAG's ambition throughout this process has been to see a Siem Reap-Angkor Action Plan that responds to the needs of all States Parties, and through the dedicated work of you and your team, and that of the implementation support unit, as well as the commitment of States Parties and civil society, MAG believes this will be achieved. As ever, MAG stands ready to work with all our partners as we finalise this week's work and look forward to its implementation.

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention is a remarkable instrument of humanitarian disarmament. We are all working in a sector that was significantly shaped by that incredible experience of the Ottawa Process, where states and civil society, including survivors, worked together to create the principle establishing that there are no circumstances that could possibly justify the harm and suffering caused by anti-personnel landmines. In this sense, the APMBC shows us that a more peaceful and secure world with no landmines is a noble purpose, that we must aspire to under this Convention.

I thank you, Mr President.