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Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

12th Meeting of State Parties

5th December 2012

GICHD Statement on Land Release

Mr President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Many of you will know that there has been much debate over the Land Release Series of the International Mine Action Standards – which after 3 years have been presented for review in accordance with IMAS policy.

Using the words of the Secretary of the IMAS when he communicated with the Review Board he describes the Land Release standard as the most important of all International Mine Action Standards'. He went on to say 'that the Land Release IMAS has wider implications - as changes within it prompt further changes to the rest of the IMAS series, as well as changes to National Mine Action Standards and to Standard Operating Procedures. The content of the Land Release IMAS also affect the structure of mine action databases and reporting formats for donors and for reporting under Convention obligations.

A consortium of NGOs spent a considerable amount of time and effort to develop a new draft standard which incorporated appreciable changes and submitted this for review by the broader mine action community.

Given the significance and importance of the document the Secretary of the IMAS requested members of the Review Board to carefully assess the proposed document and to provide comments particularly in regard to structure, terminologies, contents and level of details'

The response was considerable with 17 significant contributors to the review process providing detailed comments (coming from the UN, commercial operators, National Authorities, in addition to comments from the ISU-APBMC, the ICBL, and the GICHD).

There was notable consistency in comments received which described the proposed document as being overly ambitious, complex and lacking application in many settings. Strong concerns were also voiced by the ISU and ICBL on grounds that the draft IMAS was not consistent with Conventions in regard to land classifications.

The Review Board concluded that the Land Release IMAS should be more succinct and focus on clarifying minimum requirements in the sector allowing expansion of concepts to take place in National Mine Action Standards (geared to country specific conditions and capacities). The Land Release Standards should be easy to understand and readily implementable by all national authorities, local and international NGOs, commercial operators and militaries – operating in a wide variety of countries and environments.

While the process has been eventful it has also been drawn out - longer than had been expected. However, the result of the recent consultations provides a clear path ahead to finalise the IMAS.

An earlier set of drafts will now be edited, based on comments received and directives from the IMAS Chair. These will be shared with a Consultative Group ahead of distribution to the IMAS Review Board in February. This will allow time for an advanced version of the Land Release IMAS to be reviewed and then approved in the margins of the National Mine Action Directors and UN Advisors Meeting in April 2013.

In parallel to this, the GICHD expands an initiative in 2013 to strengthen linkages between Information Management and Operations within national programmes. My colleague will elaborate further.



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GICHD statement on Operational Efficiency and Information Management

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Maximising the effectiveness and impact of a Mine Action Programme requires transparent, evidence-based strategic decision-making and prioritization. In turn, efficient operational decisions are underpinned by accurate, timely and relevant information. While the provision of this information is the responsibility of a Mine Action Programme's Information Management Unit, the success of its work relies on organisational and managerial structures that ensure that the generation of information is properly aligned with strategic and operational objectives and reporting requirements. Too often, failure to fulfill an organisation's information requirements is attributed to inadequate technical tools and expertise, with too little attention paid to the linkages between Information Management personnel and their operational and strategic counterparts.

The GICHD has recently engaged in a project which aims to address this gap by assessing the level of alignment of Information Management activities with the strategic and operational objectives of 3 country Mine Action Programmes. It is analysing their organisational structures, and the extent to which their respective Information Management Systems support their information requirements for treaty reporting obligations, operational planning, prioritisation and impact assessment. Furthermore, their IMSMA databases are being analysed for efficiency and performance trends of operators.

The results will be fed back into workshops with both operations and information management staff in order to promote operational efficiency through improved Information Management support.